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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1899.

*Parson Kelly.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON AND ANDREW LANG.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH MR. KELLY SURPRISES SMILINDA.

THE devil in all this affair ; it was that Wogan could not be in two, or even three, places at once. While Kelly was shut in with Lady Oxford earlier, Mr. Wogan, as he has said, was on the wrong side of the door. There he was again, after the rout, while he conversed with Colonel Montague in the street. Again, while Wogan was busy with Mr. Scrope in St. James's Park, Kelly and the Colonel were exchanging their unknown explanations, of a kind not admired by Mr. Wogan, which ended in their walking, like a pair of brothers, towards George's rooms. In all these conjunctures Mr. Wogan's advice, could he have been present, might have been serviceable, or at least his curiosity must have been assuaged.

What did pass between Kelly and Lady Oxford when the rout was over, and what were the considerations which induced George and the Colonel to resist their natural and mutual desire for an honourable satisfaction ?

These questions (that perplexed Wogan when he awoke, about noon, from the fatigue of the previous day) were answered later by Kelly, and the answer must be given before the later adventures and sorrows of George can be clearly narrated. Sure, no trifle could have turned sword and gown into friends that night.

When Lady Oxford and Kelly were left alone in the empty

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rooms, among the waning candles and scattered cards, Lady Oxford marched, like indignant royalty, to the end of the inner withdrawing-room, where they could not be heard or interrupted without warning.

Mr. Kelly followed with a mind made up. It was, after all, Lady Oxford that had betrayed him, but he had, by an accident of forgetfulness, kept her letters, and they now gave him the advantage. If those letters could be saved, the Chevalier's papers could and should be saved too, and himself rescued from peril and Rose from much unhappiness. Rose was at the bottom of his thoughts that night; her face was mirrored there bright, it seemed, with divinity. The Chevalier was there too, no doubt, but Rose peeped over his shoulder. Mr. Kelly, then, hardened his heart, and, for love and loyalty, meant to push his advantage over Lady Oxford *à outrance*. He approached her as she stood retired.

'Wretch,' cried Lady Oxford, 'you promised to burn my letters. Of all traitors you are the most abandoned and perfidious.'

The Parson thought that memory supplied him with a parallel, but he replied:

'It is a promise all men make and all men break.'

Lady Oxford struck her hand upon a table.

'You swore you had burned them.'

This time George was less ready with his answer, but her ladyship stood awaiting it.

'My passion must be my excuse, madam; I could not bear to part with these elegant testimonies of your esteem. It is, as I have the honour to tell your ladyship; the brocades are in my strong box in my lodgings. To-morrow they shall be restored to your hands.'

'To-morrow!' she said, in a voice of despair. 'To-morrow! I am undone!'

'It is not so long to wait for the finery, and I do not think the streets are so purely unsafe as you suppose.'

'I am undone!' she repeated. 'The public will ring of my name. I shall become a by-word, a thing of scorn for every scribbler to aim his wit at.'

She gnawed her fingers in an agony of fear and perplexity. Mr. Kelly had learned enough. There was plainly no chance within the lady's knowledge, as he had hoped, of saving her letters. Neither, then, could the King's papers be saved. He bowed, and took a step towards the door.

'Stop!'

Mr. Kelly turned with alacrity at the eager cry, but Lady Oxford had no words of hope for him.

'You must not leave this house to-night, or must leave it secretly by the garden.'

Kelly smiled grimly. Her ladyship was suddenly grown most tender of her reputation now that it was in peril.

'Your ladyship's care for me and your hospitality overcome me, but I have, as you perhaps remarked, an assignation of honour with Colonel Montague, which nothing must prevent me from keeping. He is longing for an instant revenge—at the Hazard Table. A while ago, you may pardon me for observing, your ladyship was remote from feeling this sudden and violent anxiety on my hand.'

Mr. Kelly's irony was poured out to deaf ears. Lady Oxford paced to and fro about the room, wringing her hands in her extremity. Then she stopped suddenly.

'I might drive to the Minister's.' She reached out a hand towards the bell. Kelly shook his head.

'That visit would be remarked upon unfavourably by the friends of my Lord Oxford, who are not in the Minister's interest. Mr. Walpole has no party to-night, and must have gone to bed, 'tis verging on two o'clock, or else he is in his cups. Moreover, *The Dolliad*, the ballad on his sister, was credited to your pen. You know that Mr. Walpole loves a broad jest, and loves revenge. He will not protect you nor miss so fair an opportunity. Nay, I think I read in to-morrow's *The Flying Post*, "In the papers of the prisoner Kelly, among other treasonable matter reserved for a later occasion, were found the following letters of a high curiosity, which we are graciously permitted to publish; one begins—'Oh, my Delicious Strephon.'"

Lady Oxford snapped her fan between her fingers and dashed the fragments in Kelly's face. He owns that he cannot well complain she served him ill, but he wanted to repay her in some sort for her innuendo about his fate at the hangman's hands, and similar favours. Beholding her passion, which was not unjust, he felt bitterly ashamed of his words.

'You coward!' she said. Her dark eyes glared at him from a face white as the ivory of her broken fan, and then, quite suddenly, she burst into a storm of tears. Kelly's shame was increased a thousandfold.

'I humbly crave your ladyship's pardon,' he said. 'I have spoken in terms unworthy of a chairman. But some remarks of

your ladyship's on a future event, to me of painful interest, had left an unhappy impression.'

But Lady Oxford paid no heed to the stammered apology. As Mr. Kelly moved to her she waived him aside with her hands, and, dropping on to a sofa, pressed her weeping face into the cushions. Sobs shook her; she lay abandoned to distress.

Mr. Kelly stood apart and listened to the dolorous sound of her weeping. That was true which she had said; he had promised to burn those letters; he had sworn that he had burned them. His fine plan of using them as a weapon against her began to take quite another complexion. There were, no doubt, all manner of pious and respectable arguments to be discovered in favour of the plan, if only he pried about for them. But a saying of Mr. Scrope's was suddenly scrawled out in his recollections: 'Æneas was an army chaplain who invoked his religion when he was tired of the lady, and so sailed away with a clear conscience.' Kelly murmured 'Rose' to himself, and, again, 'Rose,' seeking to fortify himself with the mention of her name. But it had the contrary effect. Even as he heard his lips murmuring it the struggle was over.

George had a number of pretty finical scruples, of which his conduct at this crisis of his fortunes was a particular example. He relates how it seemed to him that at the mention of her name Rose threw out a hand to him and drew him up out of a slough; how he understood that his fine plan was unworthy of any man, and entirely despicable in the man whom she, out of her great condescension, had stooped to love; how he became aware that he owed it to her, since she was a woman, that no woman's fame, whether a Smilinda's or no, should be smirched by any omission of his; how he suddenly felt in his very marrow that it would dishonour Rose to save her even from great misery by a *lâcheté* towards another of her sex. His duty was revealed to him in that moment, as clear as it was unexpected. He sets his revulsion of feeling wholly to Rose's account, as a man in love should, but very likely her ladyship's fan had something to do with it.

He spoke again to Lady Oxford, and very gently.

'Madam, it is true. I promised to burn your letters. I swore that I had burned them. My honour, I perceive, can only be saved by saving yours.'

Lady Oxford raised her head from the cushions and stared at him with wondering eyes.

'Let us play this game *cartes sur table*,' continued Kelly.

Her ladyship rose from her sofa and sat herself in a chair at a table, still wondering, still suspicious. George took the chair on the other side of the table, and spoke while Lady Oxford dried the tears upon her face. To help her at all he must know all that she knew. His first business was to remove her ladyship's suspicions.

'I understand that your ladyship, by some means of which I am as yet ignorant, has become aware of a certain Plot, and has carried the knowledge to Mr. Walpole.'

Lady Oxford neither agreed nor denied. She admitted the truth of Mr. Kelly's statement in her own way.

'You bragged and blabbed to my worst enemy, to Lady Mary, with her poisonous pen,' and her fine features writhed with hatred as she spoke Lady Mary's name.

'There your ladyship was misled,' returned Kelly. 'My lips have been sealed, as I already had the honour to inform you. My Lady Mary may not love you, but she is innocent of this offence. If she wrote those rhymes, she was, indeed, more my enemy than yours; and my enemy, as your ladyship is aware, she is not.'

Lady Oxford understood the strength of the argument.

'Ah, yes,' she said thoughtfully. 'The apothecary's daughter!'

The contemptuous phrase slipped from Lady Oxford by mistake, and was not at all uttered in a contemptuous voice. But she had no doubt fallen into a habit of so terming the girl in her thoughts. None the less, however, it stung Mr. Kelly, who was at some trouble to keep his voice gentle. He knew how much Smilinda owed at this moment to the apothecary's daughter.

'The young lady to whom I conceive you refer, Miss Townley, is of a family as ancient, loyal, and honourable as your ladyship's own, and you may have seen on what terms both ladies were this evening. Moreover, Lady Mary was purely ignorant of Miss Townley's very existence when that pasquinade was written.'

'Then who wrote it?'

'Mr. Scrope, as I have the honour to repeat.'

'Scrope?' she repeated in a quick question, as though for the first time she understood that George might well be right. He gave the reasons for his belief as he had given them at the Deanery to Nicholas Wogan. They were to the last degree convincing. Lady Oxford was persuaded long before Mr. Kelly had come to an end. A look came into her face which Kelly could not understand, a look of bitter humiliation. 'Scrope,' she

muttered, as her fingers played with the cards upon the table. She overturned a card which lay face downwards on the table, and it chanced to be the knave of hearts.

'Your ladyship now sees that you fell into a natural error,' continued Kelly, who was anxious to smooth Lady Oxford's path, 'in consequence of which you took a natural revenge. May I ask how you secured the means of revenge? How, in a word, you came to know of the hidden Plot within the Plot?'

Her ladyship's answer fairly startled Mr. Kelly. It was not given at once. She still played with the cards, and overturned another. It was the knave of clubs.

'The cards tell you,' she said with a bitter smile.

Mr. Kelly leaned back in his chair open-mouthed.

'Scrope?' he asked.

'Scrope,' replied her ladyship. 'I received a humble letter from him praying that I would forgive his odious ingratitude, and, by way of peace-offering, bidding me tell my Lord Oxford——'

'Who had already withdrawn,' said George. 'I think I understand,' Lady Oxford's look of humiliation had enlightened him, 'and I think your ladyship understands with me. Mr. Scrope is a sort of a gentleman, and would prefer to do his work without appearing as an evidence. He has made use of your ladyship. He sends you the Plot and spurs you to disclose it with his ballad. He would have disclosed it himself, I doubt not, had not your ladyship served his turn. But Mr. Scrope has his refinements, and, besides that, he spares himself, would take a particular pleasure in compassing my ruin at the same time that he outwitted you.'

Little wonder that Lady Oxford broke in upon Mr. Kelly's reasonings. It must have been sufficiently galling for her to reflect that in exacting her revenge she had been the mere instrument of a man she had tossed aside.

'It is both of us that he has ruined, not you alone,' she cried.

Certainly, Mr. Scrope was a person to reckon with, and had killed quite a covey of birds with one stone.

'Are you sure?' asked Kelly. 'Are you sure of that?'

She bent across the table eagerly, but she did not reply to the question.

'Will you kill Scrope,' she flashed out, 'and you and I part friends?'

Kelly, even in the midst of this tangle of misfortunes, could not but smile.

'I fear that I may have been anticipated. Mr. Scrope has been watching your ladyship's house to-night—and Mr. Wogan observed him, and, I conceive, has undertaken for him.'

Lady Oxford at that smiled too. 'Then he is a dead man,' she said, slowly savouring her words like wine.

'But his death, madam, will not save your letters,' said Kelly; and the fire died out of her face.

'He has betrayed us both,' she moaned. It seemed she had already forgotten how she herself had seized at the occasion of betraying Mr. Kelly. Kelly was in no mood to debate these subtleties.

'Are you sure?' he contented himself with asking for a second time. 'There is one thing Mr. Scrope has not done. He has taken no measures purposely to insure that your letters will be discovered, since he does not know of them; else, no doubt, he would have done his worst. We two are still engaged in a common cause—your ladyship's. Your intentions in my regard I were much less than a man if I did not forgive, granting (what I now know) your ladyship's erroneous interpretation of my ground of offence, the babbling to Lady Mary. Does your ladyship permit me, then, at the eleventh hour, to save you, if I can find a way, from the odious consequences of Mr. Scrope's unparalleled behaviour?'

'You?'

Lady Oxford's brows were drawn together in perplexity. The notion that Mr. Kelly was prepared to do this thing was still new and strange to her.

'You?' Her eyes searched his for the truth of his purpose, and found it. 'You?' she said again, but in a voice of gratitude and comprehension. And then, with a gesture of despair, she thrust her chair back and stood up. 'You cannot save yourself. I cannot save you.'

'No,' replied George, 'myself I cannot save; but it may not be too late to save my honour, which is now wrapped up in that of your ladyship. My case is desperate; what can be done for yours? Be plain with me. How much does your ladyship know?'

Lady Oxford turned away from the table. In the face of Kelly's generosity no doubt she hesitated to disclose the whole truth of her treachery.

'I know no more than that you are in peril of arrest,' she said.

'Madam, surely you know more than that. You spoke earlier this evening of my arrest, and you spoke with the assurance of a more particular knowledge.'

Lady Oxford took a turn across the room.

'Oh, my God, what can I do?' she cried, lifting her hands to her head. 'I hear Lady Mary's laughter and the horrid things they will say!'

The whimsical inconsequence of Smilinda's appeal to her Maker did not fail to strike Kelly as ludicrous, but, as his own case was hopeless and abandoned, any thought of revenge or mockery had ceased to agitate him. His honour now stood in saving all that was left of hers from open and intolerable shame, and Rose beckoned him to the task.

'Surely you know more,' he persisted quietly.

Lady Oxford gave in and came back to the table.

'The Messengers should be waiting for you in Ryder Street.'

At last Kelly knew the worst. He would be taken before he reached his doorstep. There would be no chance of saving the cyphers in his strong box. Could he save Smilinda's letters?

He bent his forehead upon his hands, thinking. Smilinda watched him; her lips moved as though she were praying.

'I might be carried to your lodgings and claim what is mine,' she suggested.

'You would be carried to a trap—a *souricière*. Ten to one you would be arrested by the Messengers. At all events your visit would be remarked upon, and you would not obtain the letters.'

Lady Oxford had no other proposal at hand, and there was silence in the room. Mr. Kelly remained with his face buried in his hands; he took the air in long deep breaths. No other sound was audible except the faint ticking of the clock in the outer withdrawing-room. For Smilinda was holding her breath lest she should disturb the man whom she had betrayed, and who was now wholly occupied with the attempt to save her. Then she remarked that the sound of his breathing ceased. She bent forwards; he raised his face to hers. He did not seem to see her; his eyes kindled with hope.

'You have found a way?' she whispered; and he whispered back:

'A desperate chance, but it may serve.' He started to his feet. 'It must serve.'

A smile brightened over his face.

'It will serve.'

Sure he showed as much pleasure as if he had discovered an issue for himself.

'Quick!' said Smilinda, with a smile to answer his. 'Tell me!'

'Colonel Montague——'

'What of him? Why speak to me now of him?'

Lady Oxford's face had clouded at the name.

'He is your only salvation.'

'What can he do?'

'Everything we need. His loyalty to the present occupant of the throne is entirely beyond a suspicion. He can act as he will without peril to his reputation. He can even rescue your papers, which are not in the same strong box as my own. The Colonel, if any man, can assist you if he will.'

'But he will not,' said her ladyship sullenly.

'He will,' answered Kelly confidently, 'if properly approached. He is a man of honour, I take it? You will pardon me for saying that your ladyship's flattering behaviour towards me, in his presence (for the nature of which you had, doubtless, your own particular reasons) can have left him in no doubt on certain heads; while it is equally plain that your ladyship hath no longer any very tender interest in keeping his esteem and regard. Nevertheless, being a gentleman, he will not abandon your ladyship's cause.'

Lady Oxford was in no way comforted.

'It may well be as you say,' she returned with a look at Mr. Kelly. She had already one example of how much a gentleman could forgive a woman when she stood in need of his help. 'But, Mr. Kelly, you cannot come at Colonel Montague.'

'Why not?'

'You know very well that he lodges in the same house as yourself. I sent a lackey with a note to you, yesterday. And your reply was dated from 13 Ryder Street.'

Mr. Kelly stepped back; he could hardly believe his ears.

'Colonel Montague—lodges—in the same house as myself?' he asked.

'Yes,' Lady Oxford replied in a dispirited fashion. She had lost heart altogether. Mr. Kelly, on the other hand, was quite lifted up by the unexpected news.

'This is a mere miracle in nature,' he cried. 'I only went into

my present lodgings two days ago. I have been abroad for the greater part of the time, and asleep the rest, and have had no knowledge of the other tenants, even of their names. 'Faith, madam, your letters are as safe as though the ashes were now cold in your grate.'

'But the Colonel will have gone home, and you are to be taken in Ryder Street. You will not get speech with him.'

'Nay, madam, he has not gone home. He is waiting for me now.' Lady Oxford started. 'Ah, your ladyship remembers. He is waiting for me. Ten yards from your doorstep—ten yards at the farthest,' and Kelly actually chuckled. Carried away by his plan, he began to pace the room as he unfolded it. 'I shall see the Colonel, and if I can by any means do so I will acquaint him, as far as is necessary, with the embarrassing posture of your affairs. I shall give him the key of the box containing the—brocades, and, if the Messengers be not already in possession of them, the rest must be entrusted to his honour as a gentleman and a soldier. The unexpected accident of our being fellow-lodgers gives him, to this end, a great advantage, and can scarce have occurred without the providence of—some invisible power or another which watches over your ladyship.'

Kelly thought that Lady Oxford this night had enjoyed what is called the Devil's own luck.

'Have I your ladyship's leave to try my powers of persuasion with Colonel Montague?'

Very much to Kelly's surprise she moved towards him, like one walking in her sleep.

'You are bleeding,' she said, and stanced with her handkerchief some drops from his brow, where it had been cut by the broken edges of the ivory fan. Then she went again into a bitter fit of weeping, which Kelly could never bear to see in a woman. She may have remembered the snow upon the lawn, years ago, and a moment's vision of white honour. Then she stinted in her crying as suddenly as she had begun; in a time incredibly short you could not tell that she had wept.

'You must carry a token. I must write. Oh my shame!' she said, and sitting down to a scrutoire, wrote rapidly and briefly, sanded the paper, and offered it open to Kelly.

'I cannot see it; your ladyship must seal it,' he said, which she did with a head of Cicero.

George took the note, and said: 'Now time presses, madam. I must be gone. I trust that, if not now, at least later you may forgive me.'

Her lips moved, but no words came forth. Kelly made his bow, and so took leave of Smilinda, she gnawing her lips, as she watched him with her inscrutable eyes, moodily pushing to and fro with her foot the broken pieces of the fan on the polished floor.

There came into Kelly's fancy his parting view of Rose at Avignon, her face framed among the vine leaves, in the open window; she leaning forth, with a forced smile on her dear lips, and waving her kerchief in farewell. A light wind was stirring her soft hair, at that time, and she crying '*Au revoir ! Au revoir !*' There was a scent of lilacs from the garden in the air of April, George remembered, and now the candles were dying in the sconces with a stench.

With these contrasted pictures of two women and two farewells in his fancy, Kelly was descending the wide empty staircase, not knowing too well where he went. Something seemed to stir; he lifted his eyes, and before him he saw again the appearance of his King: the King, young and happy, and as beautiful as the dawn that was stealing into the room and dimming the lustres on the stairs.

Then the appearance moved aside, and Kelly found himself gazing into a great empty mirror that hung on the wall, facing the gallery above.

Lord Sidney Beauclerk, in fact, had not left the house with the other guests, and Kelly, remembering, laughed aloud as he reached the fresh air without.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN ECLOGUE WHICH DEMONSTRATES THE PASTORAL SIMPLICITY OF
CORYDON AND STREPHON.

WOGAN has told already how Kelly came out of the house in Queen Square, how he led the way to the glade, so convenient for the occasion, and how he dismissed his friend. George has since declared that he never was more tossed up and down in his mind than during that trifle of a promenade. Here was the Colonel that had insulted him, and wished nothing, more or less, than to cut his clerical throat. And here was Kelly, that must make friends with his enemy, if he was to save his honour, and the reputation, such as it was, of the woman whom he had once loved.

It was a quandary. If Kelly begun by showing a flag of truce the Colonel, as like as not, would fire on it by way of a kick or cuff, and then a friendly turn to the conversation would be totally out of the possible. Had Kelly been six inches taller than he was and a perfect master of his weapon he might have trusted to the chance of disarming the Colonel and then proposing a cartel, but unhappily it was the Elector's officer who possessed these advantages. Thus Kelly could think of nothing except to get rid of Mr. Wogan's presence as a witness of the explanation. He succeeded in that, and then marched back to the Colonel, who had stood aside while George conversed with his friend.

Kelly waited, as the wiser part, till the Colonel should show his hand. But the Colonel also waited, and there the two gentlemen stood speechless, just out of thrust of each other, while every convenience in nature called on them to begin.

At last the Colonel cleared his throat and said, 'Reverend Mr. Lace-Merchant, I am somewhat at a loss as to how I should deal with you.'

'Faith, it is my own case,' thought George to himself, but all he uttered was, 'Gallant Mr. Drill-Sergeant, the case seems clear enough. You trod on my foot, and,' said George, as he let his cloak slip from his shoulders to the ground, 'you invited me to take a walk; what circumstance now befogs your intellects?'

Kelly's instincts, naturally good, though dimmed a trifle by a learned education and a clerical training, showed him but that one way out of the wood.

'Several circumstances combine, sir. Thus, I do not want to save the hangman a job. Again, my respect for your cloth forbids me to draw sword on you, and rather prompts to a public battooning to-morrow in St. James's. I therefore do but wait to favour you with this warning, which is more than a trafficker of your kidney deserves.'

'Truth, sir, if you wait to cane me till to-morrow, I have every reason to believe that you may wait a lifetime. As to cloth, mine is as honourable as ever a German usurper's livery.'

This did not promise a friendly conclusion, but George was ever honourably ready to support the honour of his gown, and he confesses that, at this moment, he somewhat lost sight of his main object.

The Colonel stepped forward with uplifted cane, a trifle of tortoiseshell and amber, in his hand.

George drew back one pace, and folded his arms on his breast.

His eyes, which are of an uncommon bright blue, were fixed on the Colonel's.

'You will find, sir, if you advance one foot, that I do not stand kick or cuff. You are dealing with one who knows his weapon' (no experience could cure George of this delusion), 'and who does not value his life at a straw. Moreover, you began a parley for which I did not ask, though I desired it, and I have to tell you that your honour is involved in continuing this conversation in quite another key.'

George stepped forward the pace he had withdrawn, and clasped his hands behind his back, watching the Colonel narrowly.

There was something in his voice, more in his eyes. The Colonel had seen fire, and knew a brave man when he met one. He threw down his cane, and Kelly reckoned that the worst of his task was over.

'You may compel me to fight,' George went on, 'and I never went to a feast with a better stomach, but first I have certain words that must be spoken to you.'

'You cannot intend to escape by promising a discovery?'

'Sir, I do not take you for a Messenger or a Minister. One or both I can find without much seeking, and, for that sufficient reason, before they lay hands on me I absolutely demand to speak to you on a matter closely touching your own honour, which, as I have never heard it impeached, I therefore sincerely profess my desire to trust.'

'You are pleased to be complimentary, but I know not how my honour can be concerned with a Jacobite trafficker and his treasons.'

'I make you this promise, that if you do thus utterly refuse to listen for five minutes I will give you every satisfaction at the sword's point, or, by God! will compel you to take it, as you have been pleased to introduce batoons into a conversation between gentlemen. And if, when you have heard me, you remain dissatisfied, again I will give you a lesson with sharps. You see that we are not likely to be interrupted, and that I am perfectly cool. This is a matter to each of us of more than life or death.'

'I do see that you desire to pique my curiosity for the sake of some advantage which I am unable to perceive. Perhaps you expect your friends on the scene?'

'You may observe that I began by dismissing the only friend I have in this town. Do you, perhaps, suspect that Mr. Nicholas Wogan needs, or has gone to procure, assistance?'

'I confess that I know that gentleman too well for any such suspicions.'

'Then, sir, remember that the Roman says *noscitur a sociis*, and reflect that I am a friend of Mr. Wogan's, who must stand sponsor, as you do not know me, for my honesty. Moreover,' said George, working round by a risky way to his point, 'had I wished to escape I could, instead of seeking you, have sneaked off t'other way. You observed that I remained some minutes with a lady to-night after you and the rest of her company had withdrawn.'

'It is very like your impudence to remind me of that among other provocations! I am not concerned in your merchant's business of brocades.'

'But, indeed, with your pardon, you are concerned in the highest degree, and that is just the point I would bring you to consider.'

'I tire of your mysteries, sir,' he said, shrugging his shoulders. 'Speak on, and be brief.'

'On these brocades turns the question whether the honour of a lady, which you are bound to cherish, shall be the laughing-stock of the town. Sir, in a word, you, and you only, can save that person; need I say more?'

'Did she send you with this message to save your own skin?'

'That is past saving, except by a miracle, which I am in no situation to expect will be wrought for me. Understand me, sir, I am out of hope of earthly salvation. I have nothing to gain, nothing to look for from man. I make you freely acquainted with that position of my affairs, which are purely desperate. And the person of whom we speak looks to you as her sole hope in the world. She sends you this; take it; I know not the contents, the seal, as you perceive, being unbroken.'

'This looks more serious,' said the Colonel, taking the sealed note which Kelly handed to him.

He pored over the letter, holding it up to the moonlight. 'Do as the bearer bids you, if you would have me live,' he read; then, with a bitter laugh, he tore the note into the smallest shreds, and was about to dash them down on the grass.

'Hold, sir,' Kelly said; 'preserve them till you can burn them. Or—I have myself swallowed the like before now.'

The Colonel stared, and put the fragments into his pocket-book.

'Well,' he said, 'I am hearing you.'

'I thank you, sir; you will grant that I did not wrong you in trusting your generosity. If I am a free man to-morrow, or even to-night after this business is done, I shall have the honour of meeting you, wherever you are pleased to appoint. For my cloth have no scruple, I never was more than half a parson.'

'Sir, I shall treat you as you may merit. And now for your commands, which, it seems, I am in a manner under the necessity to obey.'

'You see this key, sir,' said Kelly, offering that of one of his strong boxes; 'take it, go to my lodgings, which, by a miracle, are in the same house as your own. Enter my parlour, 'tis on the ground floor; open the small iron strong box which this key fits, and burn all the—brocades which you find there.'

'This is a most ingenious stroke of the theatre! I am to burn, I perceive, all the papers, or brocades as you call them, which damn you for a Jacobite plotter! It is not badly contrived, sir, but you have come to the wrong agent. I am acquainted with the ingenious works of the French playwrights.'

'Sir, you compel me, against my will, to be more plain with you than I desire. It is your own fault if I give you concern. On opening the coffer you may satisfy yourself of the hand of the writer, which cannot but be familiar to you. Moreover, the letters of the person for whom we are concerned are addressed (that you may not make the error which you apprehend) to one Strephon—not a cant name of a political plot.'

'She called you—Strephon?'

'She was so kind.'

'And I was Corydon,' groaned the Colonel between his teeth.

'*Arcades ambo!*' said George. 'But now 'tis the hour of a third shepherd! Lycidas, perhaps, *le plus heureux des trois*. Oh, Colonel, be easy, we are both yesterday's roses, or, rather, I am the rose of the day before yesterday.'

'And it is for this woman——'

'Ay, it is just for this woman that you are to risk your commission, for a risk there may be, and I my life, for I could get away from this place. You perceive that we have no alternative?'

'What must be, must,' he said, after some moments of thought; 'but what if I find the Messengers already in possession of your effects?'

'In that case I must depend solely on your own management and invention. But I may say that gold will do much, nay, everything with such fellows; and your position, moreover, as a

trusted officer of your King will enable you to satisfy men not very eminent for scruples.'

'Gold! I have not a guinea, thanks to the cards, not a stiver in my rooms to-night. The cards took all.'

'Here, at least,' cried George, 'I can offer some kind of proof of my honesty, and even be of service. I am poor, Heaven knows, but there are my winnings, easily enough to corrupt four Messengers. Use the money; I have friends who will not let me starve in the Tower. Nay, delicacy is purely foolish. I insist that you take it.'

'Mr. Johnson,' the Colonel said, 'you are a very extraordinary man.'

'Sir, I am an Irishman,' said George.

'I will not say that I never met one like you, but I hope, after all accounts are settled between us, to have the advantage of your acquaintance. Sir, *au revoir*.'

'I shall be with you, sir, in ten minutes after your arrival in your lodgings, whether the coast be clear or not. But let me attend you across the Park, as far as the corner of Pall Mall Street.'

If Kelly was an Irishman, Montague was an Englishman, and Kelly was well enough acquainted with that nation to know that the last proof given of his disinterestedness was by much the most powerful he could have used. He reflected again on the Devil's own luck of Smilinda that night, for if the cards had gone contrary to her and George he could not have produced this demonstration of his loyalty, nor could he very well have invited the Colonel to pay the piper out of his own pocket.

The Colonel also walked silently, turning about in his mind all the aspects of this affair.

'I understand,' he said, 'that you are upon honour not to involve me in tampering with anything disaffected? You will take no advantage whatever that may give me the air of being concerned to shelter yourself or your party?'

'You have my word for it, sir. Your honour, next to that in which we are equally concerned, is now my foremost consideration.'

He nodded, then sighed, as one not very well satisfied.

'Things may come to wear a very suspicious complexion, but I must risk a little; the worse the luck. Mr. Johnson, neither of us has been very wise in the beginnings of this business.'

'I came to that conclusion rather earlier than you, sir, and on very good evidence.'

'No doubt,' growled Montague, and he muttered once or twice, 'Strephon, Corydon—Corydon, Strephon.' Then he turned unexpectedly to Kelly. 'You mentioned these letters as I was leaving the room, and I noticed that her ladyship grew white. She kept you, she knew then of the danger you were in and has just informed you of it. Now, how came she to have so particular a knowledge of your danger?'

Mr. Kelly did not answer a question which boded no good for Lady Oxford. 'She had grounds of resentment against you in a certain ballad.'

Kelly seized at the chance of diverting Montague from his suspicions, and showed how the ballad was aimed at him no less than at her ladyship, and, without giving the Colonel time to interrupt,

'Here I must bid you *au revoir*, sir,' he said, 'for some ten minutes, time enough for you to do what is needed, if, as I hope, you are not disturbed. The Messengers, I conceive, will be lurking for me in Bury Street outside our common door; they will not think of preventing you from entering, and before I arrive, whatever befalls *me*, our common interest will be secured.'

'You are determined to follow?'

'What else can I do? I must know the end of this affair of the brocades. It is not wholly impossible that the Messengers have wearied of waiting, and think to take me abed to-morrow. When you have done what you know, you will leave my room, and I, if I am not taken, have some arrangements of my own to make. That, I presume, is not a breach of my engagement with you?'

'Certainly not, sir. When I have left your room I am in no sense responsible for your actions. I wish you good fortune.'

While they thus walked, and were sad enough, they came within earshot of Wogan, who, at that moment, was declaiming Mr. Pope's night-piece to Mr. Scrope, who was in the Canal.

What conversation passed between the four gentlemen Wogan has already told, and he has mentioned how the Colonel went away, and how after using pains to prevent Mr. Scrope from catching a cold, he himself withdrew to court slumber, and left Mr. Kelly alone in the moonlight.

Mr. Kelly did not remain in the open, but lay *perdu* on the shadowy side of the grove. Concealing himself from any chance of a rencounter, he allotted a space of twelve minutes by his watch, and time never paced more tardy with him in all his life. There

was in his favour but the one chance that the Messengers might choose to take him abed in the early morning, when the streets would be empty. At this moment St. James's Street was full of chairs and noises; night-rakers were abroad, and the Messengers, who are not very popular, might fear a rescue by the rabble. On this chance Kelly fixed his hopes, for if he could but be alone for ten minutes in his lodgings, he and his friends would have little to fear from any evidence in his possession.

If the Colonel succeeded, Lady Oxford, and, with her ladyship, George's honour, were safe. If, by an especial miracle of heaven, George could have a few minutes alone in his room, the Cause and the faithful of the Cause would be safe. The Colonel, Kelly hoped, could hardly fail to do his part of the work; he would enter his own rooms unchallenged, his uniform and well-known face must secure him as much as that, and the Epistles of Smilinda would lie in ashes.

So he hoped, but nothing occurred as he anticipated.

(To be continued.)

Some Makers of Sweet Sounds.

THE days of the Commonwealth were numbered. Cromwell had succumbed to private troubles, added to those of his self-imposed task as Protector; Army and Parliament were in open rivalry, and all eyes turned to the Stuart over the water.

Assured of a welcome, Charles Stuart came, and forthwith the country went mad from excitement at having a king again. So it followed his lead in everything, and the drama, dancing, dice, and music became short-cuts to all manner of excess. Vice went gaily, unaccompanied by shame or reticence, for the royal example was its crown, and fashion set her seal of approval upon its scarlet raiment.

Even the soberest-minded were careful not to appear 'righteous overmuch' in those days when England was said to be 'merrie,' when religion and moral restraint were alike trampled under foot as savouring of Puritanism.

It seemed hard that music, with a language to be understood by those alone who had received the gift, should be abused and turned to evil, yet so it was under the ruling of a king whose keynote was pleasure, and who took delight in sweet sounds. It is reported that he sang a 'plump bass,' and had twenty-four violins to perform in the Chapel Royal, while at Whitehall concerts sensual airs found more favour than any other style. The Saraband, the Chaconne, the Pavanne, and many more such as the French approved—combinations of notes with neither grammar nor devotion to recommend them—pleased Charles's Court; and, strange to say, in the face of this fact Church music also received an impetus in his reign.

'God forgive me,' says Pepys, whose *Diary* supplies a wealth of gossip for lovers of prying into the past, 'I was never so little pleased with a concert in my life.'

So wrote he after his return from a performance at the Palace, with the shrill sounds of fiddles, the twang of citherns still in his

ears, and all around an atmosphere of unequalled coarseness and immorality. No doubt many were in sympathy with Pepys, for the national spirit could not be as easily perverted in music as in other matters, and the news that Puritanism had received its death-blow by a revival of monarchy brought to England the two greatest organ-builders ever seen in the country.

As all knew, the king of instruments had suffered terribly, and been forced into silence during the days when stained glass, carvings, sacred books—in short, most outward signs of religious feeling—were destroyed by ignorance or fanaticism. It was not likely that the ‘kist o’ whistles,’ as the Scotch contemptuously called the organ, should escape a like fate; but in France and Germany were biding their time certain makers of sweet sounds, and when they heard that Charles II. had been received by his people with open arms, they hastened to cross the Channel.

Bernard Smith was the first to court royal patronage, and he went from Holland, where organs were even then general in churches, to the country in which not long before pipes had been melted down for bullets, or chopped up for firewood. Foreign workmen sent word to him that better days were coming, and Dallans was quick to make alliance with such a talented fellow-builder in the prime of life, who brought two nephews to help him in his new venture. The immediate results of Smith’s appearance in the sunshine of kingly favour was an order to put up an organ at Whitehall; and this was accordingly done with all despatch, though, as events proved, more to the Smiths’ satisfaction than to that of the appointed judges.

It is not easy for those who have not seen very early instruments to picture what they were like, nor to understand how difficult they must have been for performance. To begin with, the keys were few in number, besides being so broad, so deeply sunk and hard to sound that the musician struck them with his clenched fists! The stops in some cases were behind him, at the east end, and were managed by the blower, who at his discretion moved iron levers eighteen inches long. Centuries before, regals and Bible organs had been steps on the ladder of improvement, and slow was ascent till the seventeenth century was well advanced.

Repairs were considered an item to be paid by the parish, in common with the roof, windows, or any other part of the church, and an entry in a churchwarden’s account, dated 1513, runs as follows: ‘Payde to ye clarke for mending ye organnyys, and he

shall take care of ye pipes and ye bellows ye space of ij yerres at hys own charge five shillings.'

Father Smith, so called to distinguish him from his nephew and namesake, had far too much of the reverence which goes with true love for art to put the creation of his hands on a level with walls, or roofs, for repairs by a parish clerk. No; if wood had so much as a knot in the grain, or metal were in any way faulty, the builder rejected them, and made new pipes, scorning to waste time in patching up poor material. Organ repairs seem to have been a considerable item of expense to parishes, and small wonder, when the sheepskin bellows, being ill-cured, resented too much work by cracking, or the 'payre of organs' got out of gear in other ways best known to those whose painful duty it was to make or perform on them.

Bernard and Gerard worked contentedly under an uncle who soon found that the land of his adoption promised to be a good friend; for, partly perhaps from reaction after previous gloom, there was such an outburst of music all over the country at the Restoration, such a revival of song and twanging of catgut, that hope revived for better things, and the Smiths saw themselves floating with the tide towards success.

At every party might be seen the pipe, shawm, lute, or viol de gamba, every street had its band, and even in the barber's shop a cithern, guitar, or small viol hung on the wall. In country places the fiddler might be called an established custom, who was sure of a welcome, a meal, or a silver coin, according to the wealth of those whose threshold he crossed. A not over-flattering description of this gentleman says: 'A country wedding or a Whitsuntide ale are the two main places he domineers in, where he goes for a musician and overlooks the bagpipes. The rest of him is drunk or in the stocks.'

When success whispers golden hopes, rivalry is apt to step in, and before the Smiths had been many months in England another name reached their ears in connection with organ-building. It was only human nature under the circumstances to dislike this, and the Germans could comfort themselves by the assurance that, having been first in the field, they had secured attention, besides ample work.

Many years before, one Thomas Harris put up an organ at Magdalen College, and afterwards, at some date unknown, emigrated with his son John to France. He may have seen that stormy times were coming, when his business would make no way,

and so wisely steered for the nearest haven where he might work on unmolested. That, however, is mere speculation, for little or nothing is on record about Smith and Harris till 1660, in which year both went over to England to tempt fortune, and entered the arena of public opinion as rivals. John had with him his son Renatus, an eager youth of twenty, full of health, hope, talent, enjoyment, and, in short, all that helps to beautify life. At first the two may have regretted that they did not earlier make their venture, for Dallans and the Smiths seemed to have most of the work in the country; and, thanks to their diligence, combined with superiority, were in men's mouths as not to be surpassed.

'Patience, my son,' said John; 'we must wait a little. Fortunes are not made in a day, nor reputations either.'

But Renatus was young, and he did not understand or like that word 'patience.' He chafed at the scanty encouragement his father received; he was indignant that a worker who was every whit as good as the German should not be able to push his way quicker, and determined to do so at all costs.

It spoke well for the future that His Majesty smiled on music, and three years after he came to the throne he augmented by Privy Seal the salaries of those gentlemen who were attached to the Chapel Royal. At the same time thirty pounds a year were settled on the Choir Master, Mr. Henry Cook, and his successors in office; and youngsters were allowed to show what talent they possessed in composition, instead of being bound down to follow along the narrow, beaten tracks of those who had gone before. These things were good for the cause which many had at heart, and music lovers who were rich with buds of promise opened, as years went on, into blossom, because they were not nipped by the frost of misunderstanding in an uncongenial atmosphere.

John Blow, then a lad of fifteen, already showed that some day his name might make itself widely known, and Henry Purcell's bird-like notes were first heard in the Chapel Royal when he was only six. Aldrich, Dr. Pepusch, Corelli, Banister were older, and already rising into fame, and in the purlieus of Clerkenwell lived one of nature's gentlemen, who traded in small coal, though his soul was given to greater things. More of him anon; and meanwhile the Smiths must again be glanced at, in their workshop, Red Lion Street, High Holborn, where the floor was strewn with shavings or piled with pipes, varied by boards in every stage of their conversion into instruments.

The first attempt at Whitehall was too hasty and failed to satisfy, yet, in spite of it, the Smiths received an order to supply an organ for Westminster Abbey, next for St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, and thirdly for St. Margaret's at Westminster, after which Father Smith was appointed organist of the last-named at a salary of twenty pounds. His reputation was made before this, and thenceforth work was a series of triumphs. December 30, 1666, there is a note in Pepys's *Diary*: 'I to the Abbey, and walked there, seeing the great confusion of people that came to hear the organ,' the people who, after the manner of sheep going through a hedge gap, followed where others went before. They extolled or blamed according to fashion, whether they were capable of judging or not; and thus it came to pass that Fortune smiled on the Smiths, who seemed to have all-powerful patrons' custom in their hands when the Harrises first made their venture.

Being wiser in his generation than his son, John Harris turned his attention to the country, because he soon saw that Father Smith was more than his match in London, where competition was therefore useless. Renatus' belief in himself made him chafe against his parent's verdict; nevertheless he had to submit, and the pair went to Gloucester to build a new organ for the Cathedral, which had suffered grievously, among many others, during the Commonwealth. Articles of agreement were duly drawn up between 'the Dene and Chapter of Gloucester of the one part, and Thomas, and René Harris his sonne, both of the Cittie of London, organ-makers, of the other parte. The said Thomas Harris and René Harris (for, and in consideracon of the yearely Rent and Covenant herein after menconed to be paid and performed) do for themselves severally promise, covenant, and agree to and with the said Dene and Chapter that they, the ad: Thomas Harris and René Harris, or one of them, shall and will from time to time (during the pleasure of the said Dene and Chapter), well and sufficiently keepe the organ in as good repair as it now is, especially as to the musique part of it, as alsoe to keep it from Runniges, Stickinges, and Cipheringes, or whatever else may happen to the prejudice of the said organ (all violent mocons or accidents by ropes and prejudice by Ratts or other like vermin excepted). And further that they, the said Thomas Harris and René Harris, or one of them, shall once in half a yeare or oftener, as occasion shall require, give notice to the said Dene and Chapter of theire certain abode, that soe notice may be given to them for mendinge the said organ when there shall be occasion.'

So the articles continue their wordy way for many a page, providing against every possible variety of accident to the new organ, and securing its builders' services at any time.

Gradually, by quiet perseverance, the visitors from France won a footing—they either restored or built instruments for several other cathedrals—and the Smiths began to feel a little jealous, a trifle afraid lest their own work should be interfered with. In 1672 Dallans died, and his loss was serious to Father Smith, who found himself left to contend single-handed against the Harrises. There was nothing to fear from the elder, but Renatus, with his tall, lithe form, sparkling eyes, and youthful vigour, was a rival whom he dreaded.

The men came to open strife in a musical sense in 1682, when both received permission to put up organs in the Temple; and Smith was furious, because he urged that the order had first been given to him. Anger, however, was useless when competition had been decided upon by those who held the purse, and both parties began their preparations, Father Smith in wrath that still smouldered, because no notice was taken of a memorial signed by several tradesmen to say that they had heard the commission given to him. The benchers of the Temple suggested the trial because they found the Harrises had brought themselves into notice by excellent work done at Chichester, Winchester, Hereford, Ely, Norwich, Cork; St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin; King's College Chapel, Cambridge; and other places.

While the builders made pipes and bellows, shaped keys and hammered metal, concerts multiplied; musicians, being nourished in an atmosphere of dulcet strains shaped by science, thrived apace, and music might almost be said to vie with gambling as an amusement. The concerts were for the most part advertised in papers or cried in the streets, and the following, taken from the *London Gazette*, gives an idea of the style in which people were, in the seventeenth century, attracted to hear what might please their minds through their ears.

'This is to give notice that at John Banister's house (now called the Music School), over against the George Tavern, in White Fryers, this present Monday, will be music performed by excellent masters, beginning precisely at four of the clock in the afternoon, and at every afternoon for the future precisely at the same hour.'

The art was by no means confined to smart ladies with feathers and jewels, or to needy gentlefolks who looked to make

a living by their gift. In the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell might be seen a short, thick-set man, arrayed in a blue smock, the worse for wear, to say nothing of coal stains. Yet what cared Thomas Britton, the wearer, when the laden basket he carried had to be delivered at his patrons' doors? The deeply sunk eyes under thick, dark brows were windows to a soul that occupied itself with far other matters, and, when duty was done, the soiled smock was flung aside in the little corner-house which once had been a stable.

Beyond was a narrow passage leading past the old Jerusalem Tavern into St. John's Square, and Britton's friend, who presided over the tavern, supplied his visitors with beer.

Yes, despite poverty, dust, small coal, and most unfashionable quarters, there were many visitors to the humble abode, and, furthermore, they were obliged to climb laboriously up some steep steps, set on the wall outside, to reach a loft where entertainment awaited them. The said loft was a long narrow room, so low that a tall man could barely stand upright without touching the beams overhead, and there Thomas Britton provided every week a concert for love instead of money.

The Duchess of Queensberry, among other fine dames about Court, mounted those steps on more than one occasion, for the small-coal man's fame as a patron of literature as well as art spread widely in London, and there were few who did not know that harmony of the best was to be enjoyed by those who chose to make their way to Aylesbury Street. At the harpsichord Handel presided in the early days of his first visit to England, or Dr. Pepusch, and Medler or Banister took first violin. Britton sometimes joined in with the viol de gamba, and he managed to squeeze an organ into the end of his room, where high and low were welcomed on Thursday afternoons.

Rumour said that Sir Roger l'Estrange, a well-known character at that time, helped to make Britton fashionable, and to set his concerts on foot about 1678. Be that as it may, the house attracted the greatest talent, besides beauty and wit, that were known in his day, and, though the concert-giver's friends urged that a charge should be made in return for their enjoyment, he was content with this alone to reward him. Walpole says that in time Britton yielded to the extent of a ten-shilling fee per annum, and a penny for each 'dish of coffee' consumed on the premises. But he is the only authority for this statement, whereas

Thoresby in his *Journal*, as late as 1712, mentions 'a noble concert of music for many years past, gratis.'

The humbly born, noble-minded artist died two years after that date, and gratitude burst into poetry to keep his memory green when those who for years had visited him should be silenced by the same messenger :

Though doomed to small coal, yet to arts allied,
Rich without wealth and famous without pride,
Music's best patron, judge of books and men,
Beloved and honoured by Apollo's train.

Towards the end of May, 1684, Renatus Harris gave notice that his organ was ready, and asked for permission to set it up for trial on the south side of the Communion Table, Smith having already placed his in the north aisle. Next year, after much debate, judgment was given in favour of Smith's instrument. The benchers, however, would not agree with their brethren of the Middle Temple, and the battle dragged on for three more weary years before the successful builder was paid a thousand pounds.

Very acceptable the money must have been, because by that time both Smiths and Harrises had nearly ruined themselves by active rivalry, and the Temple competition was only one of many. Some years previously Renatus Harris had challenged the older builder to make within a certain time reed stops, such as the vox humana, cremona, and double courtel, which, as new inventions, gave great delight to listeners.

Doctors Blow and Purcell were selected by Father Smith to try his organ when it was ready, and Harris fixed upon Baptiste Draghi, organist to Queen Catherine at Somerset House. The very night before performance Harris's friends cut his rival's bellows in such a way that they would not work properly; nevertheless the musicians managed to play, and the casting vote fell to Judge Jeffries, who gave it in favour of the German. Perhaps he was somewhat swayed by the unfair trick which had been played upon Smith, and Harris, sore, no doubt, from failure after the sharp contention, was consoled only in part when his organ was bought by the Irish to be put up in Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin.

The affair indirectly did good to Harris by making him more prominent with the public, and in 1690 Renatus went to Oxford to enlarge the organ built by his grandfather for Magdalen College. The green-eyed monster made war within him, despite success,

despite rising fame, for was not Bernard Smith 'organ-maker in ordinary' to His Majesty, and, as such, allotted apartments in Whitehall called the organ-builder's warehouse? While this was the case there was small peace of mind for the other, especially when he knew that his rival had been given important work at St. Paul's.

By that time the elder Harris had gone to his rest, so Renatus took up his abode in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, and bent his best energies to devise some novelty by which he might triumph over Smith.

One day the music-loving portion of the public was startled by a printed notice to the effect that all were invited to Wine Office Court who cared to hear a semitone divided into fifty distinct and separate parts. Father Smith scoffed and stormed, said such a thing was impossible, and that the advertisement was merely a piece of folly to attract fools by curiosity to the warehouse. But, calm in the consciousness of a well-thought-out plan, Renatus paid no heed, and when the day came he bowed courteously to the wearers of curled wigs, to the dainty ladies with patches, rouge, and fans who sought admission to hear this strange new thing. Few of them most likely had ears fine enough to catch the delicate gradations of sound, and those who happened to be thus gifted were in all probability rewarded by melodies afterwards on the showman's instruments, thanks to which they went their ways duly impressed with his talent.

Such tests were not really needed to prove it, for Renatus had long before written his name in capitals on people's minds, and consequently he found no lack of work to do. Doubtless he was personally in touch with Aldrich, Blow, and Purcell, the last two of whom were in turn organists at Westminster Abbey, and found their graves under its shadow when their work was done. Harris would also have known Banister the violinist, son to him who advertised daily concerts at his house, Thomas Britton, and many more of like mind on the subject of an art which links earth to heaven. For there is a freemasonry founded on sympathy in music, which draws its possessors together as few things have the same power to do, and London was always a centre to attract talent from every part, that it might sun itself, if chance were kind, in the monarch's smiles.

Towards the latter end of his life Renatus Harris retired to Bristol, where he continued to provide for church harmonies with the help of his two sons, Renatus and John. By that time he

had lost father and wife, seen four sovereigns lay down the sceptre, and gone through changes enough to fill a volume, could they be enumerated at length. Many of Harris's contemporaries were in that world of fuller comprehension of which we know so little while toiling in this.

Britton went in the early autumn of 1714; Purcell nearly twenty years before, when he was only thirty-seven; Blow in 1708; and Renatus began to feel, as our elders are apt to do, that he was standing alone among the ghosts of his youth, stranded by Time's tide on the shore among those who had been in arms or unborn when he first came from France.

Two years after George I. was crowned in Westminster Abbey Renatus Harris the elder took leave of the younger, set his affairs in order, and passed to the other side. He was only seventy-five, but men live less by years than by work and experience, and the great organ-builder was aged by much of both before his sun went down in a flood of glory which still lingers, though nearly two hundred years have since rolled away.

Full half a century elapsed after the Restoration before organs became general in churches, and though, in the peaceful times that followed at intervals, the instruments were gradually brought to much perfection, none can forget the two makers of sweet sounds who did, perhaps, more than all the rest to help forward the cause of religious music in their day, namely, Father Smith and Renatus Harris.

S. M. CRAWLEY BOEVEY.

'Hitherto Shalt Thou Come.'

THERE is no sea left uncharted,
 There are no lands left untrod;
 We have wandered hungry-hearted
 In the haunts of the forest god.
 The shadows have fled before us,
 And far on the hunter's trail
 The wind in the wires hums o'er us,
 The sunbeams flash from the rail.

Flood and famine and fever,
 We have met them and overthrown;
 In the lair of the grim, striped reiver
 We have builded our temples of stone;
 Through death and disease and disaster
 We have fought and fashioned our path,
 Till the Earth has owned her master,
 And yielded us all she hath.

And the Sea—we have plumbed and sounded,
 We have marked each reef and shoal,
 We have striven to bound the unbounded,
 We have dared the ice of the Pole;
 We have strewn with our wrecks her beaches,
 Our bones have whitened her deeps,
 And the coil of our cable reaches
 Through the slime where the kraken sleeps.

She is ours! and the breakers thunder;
 She is ours! and the ripples laugh;
 She has riven our fetters asunder,
 And scattered our fleets like chaff;
 We have challenged her, we have wooed her,
 We have fronted her winds with our will,
 But never enthralled nor subdued her—
 She keepeth her secret still.

D. J. ROBERTSON.

The Blind Mare's Warning.

'**T**HAT a man should foresee things, except by cleverness and "savvy," I could never believe; but when it comes to a mare having the second sight, and she a blind mare. . . .!'

Mr. Fred Huggat, of Huggat & Love, auctioneers, Harkaway, N.S.W., expectorated on the soil, already humid, in token of disbelief. We were loafing on his verandah, watching joyously the break up of an Australian drought of five years' standing. Ah, how good the earth smelled, and how the fragrance of a wet mackintosh brought back days on the rivers and lochs of Morven! So Fred Huggat and I stood and gazed, he talking of old, unhappy, far-off droughts and mining experiences; I seeing with the inner eye Lorne and Loch Aline, and Loch AriInnes. Thus I heard but little of Fred's long stories till he broke into that remark with which I began:

'When it comes to a mare having the second sight, and she a blind mare. . . .!'

'But, Fred,' I replied, 'who's saying that a mare ever had the gift of prophecy?—bar one, St. Columba's pony. It wept like anything the last time it saw the saint, and put its head in his lap like a woman in distress.'

'Who's Columba?'

'An old *wireenun* (prophet) in my own country; dead twelve hundred years ago.'

'And they tell that yarn of his gee?'

'Well, it was written down on the word of the fellow who saw the thing occur.'

'That would be two cases in twelve hundred years, counting my blind mare. But come into the office, the rain has brought the cold with it. Come in; I'll tell you all about it.'

So we kicked the mud and gravel off our boots, shook the wet from our waterproofs and umbrellas, and with a little drop of

whisky, hot water, and sugar, we were soon very comfortable indeed before the glowing log fire in the back office. And then Fred began :

‘It must be five-and-twenty years ago now that I was carrying stores from the river boats lying here at Harkaway to Wallandry. It had been a dripping summer, and we had lots of green feed right up to the New Year, and the river never got too low for the boats, so we were having a busy time and money was easily made then. Three of us had mated up together, and were all bound for the same station—Bill Hart, Peter Elliot, and myself. Bill was a good teamster, but a flash, rather low sort of a fellow, and neither Peter nor I ever got to be genuine mates with him. Peter was a very different sort. He was a gentleman, and a scholar, too, but he had had no luck, poor fellow ! He had been at Rugby and Oxford, and still kept up his classics more or less ; a queer thing, you may think, for a man to do while driving a team through the bush, but Peter was not the only one I’ve known on a team and with his head full of Homer and Horace. I had a smattering myself and liked it well, and Peter often read me an ode before turning in at night, or, in the beautiful crisp autumn weather, lying down beside the waggon when we camped for dinner.

‘Peter, as I said, had had a poor innings. He was immensely muscular, a first-rate boxer and athlete all round, but his eyesight had failed him before leaving Oxford. When he left the University a rich uncle in Canada had promised him a share in his business, a big timber concern, and poor Peter had jumped at the chance. The dread of his eyesight failing had always been a haunting nightmare, and the bright, open-air, Canadian life was to him a perfect God-send. But man proposes ! Peter and his uncle fell in love with the same fair Canadian ; and, unfortunately, she much preferred Peter. From that moment the prospective share in the timber business vanished into air, and uncle and nephew were deadly enemies. The lady had no money ; Peter’s home prospects had all been allowed to slip, so he turned up in Melbourne with a few pounds, many suits of very well-fitting clothes, many pairs of elegant boots, and a very handsome dressing-case. The cash went first, then the dressing-case, and soon Peter had only enough to buy his “bluey,”¹ hump it, and make for the bush. He was in Sydney when he was at his lowest, and he told me a terrible tale of his struggles. He could get no work, every copper was

¹ Australian word = ‘pack’ (origin unknown).

gone, he owed his landlady fifteen shillings, and had no prospects of paying even that. So he left her his small belongings, and walked to the harbour to say good-bye to life and misery. He was a very powerful swimmer, and he couldn't make up his mind to tie a weight to his feet and die like a dog. So he stripped and struck out for the open sea, to swim, he said, until his strength gave out, and then he must surely drown. And he swam on and on. The water was warm and lapped around his lips, and as he lay down to a side-stroke, it laved his hair, washing over him, and cooling his poor brain. And the pleasant wonted exercise brought back all the healthy feeling of life again, and the desire to live. So he lay on his back and the waters lapped around him and kissed him, and the crescent moon and a great planet looked down upon him, and life, even life with all its miseries, was sweet, and it seemed all but intolerable to die. Then he turned and looked at the far-distant shore, and the sight made him long yet more to live. So he fought his way back, stroke by stroke, lying and resting now and again on his back, till the distance grew nearer and nearer; and at long and at last, faint and exhausted, he drew himself with his last effort up the steps—the very place from which he had started. Then, just as his limbs left the water, within a few feet of him, the back fin of an enormous shark cut the wave, thirsting for blood. Peter sank down on the steps a limp heap, and cried like a child. But he was grit, and he got a light job that night, cleaning a buggy and harness, and this led on to something better. He had gone a-shearing, had been a rouse-about, and a miner, and here he was with us and a team of horses, a waggon and all his worldly goods packed aboard, healthy, comparatively happy, if a little melancholy, and fairly on the up-grade again—and fortunes are sometimes easily made in a new country.

'Well, we started for Wallandry, our third and last trip, late in April, each with a full load and a full team. The roads were terribly heavy, and we often camped by the same fire for three nights on end, double banking each waggon over a short stage. But the longest trip comes to an end at last, and by the middle of May we had gained the little foothills where the ground was firm; had left the sticky, melancholy plains, and were within a couple of stages of Wallandry. We had camped for the night, fed the horses, hobbled our hacks, let them all go, and they had wandered off into the dark bush. Before half an hour had passed we had heard the last of them, as they fed away down by the

banks of the creek, cropping the native grasses growing scantily among the yet unrunng box and pine trees.

'I had a very curious old mare in my team. How old I cannot say, and I came by her in a rather uncanny way, but I'll tell you about that some other wet day. Anyway she was very old, and long past mark of mouth. Her teeth were yellow with age, and nearly as long as a boar's tusks. But her grinders were good, she was a rare doer, and one of the best pullers in the team. She was stone blind. The eyeballs were there, unshrunk in their sockets, but covered with a dense yellowish film, and she could see absolutely nothing. She was a light dappled brown with a good deal of white on the legs, and she had a curious white star, a blaze face, and a pink nose. The star high up on her forehead was, as I have said, queerly shaped, and was marked by several brown splashes. Seen at a little distance and looked at off-hand, it made a pretty perfect picture of a skull. Old "Pallida Mors" Peter and I called her, and good puller as she was, we never liked her. There was something peculiarly uncanny about her, and she had nasty short, small ears, which she always carried "half cock."

'We were camped by the banks of the Black Dog Creek. At our backs, as we lay after supper, was the winding creek, and in front, beyond our fire, was a semicircle of young pine trees—a snug spot for a camp. It was very dark and airless, with a faint mist. It had rained half the day, cleared up, and thickened again, and was intensely still.

'We were all very silent somehow that night. The silence of the bush was infectious, or there was some awe upon us, and we didn't dare to break the spell. Presently, far away through the gums and pines, we could hear the low breath of a waking wind; nearer and nearer it came sighing along, and as it grew louder it reminded you of the distant roar of breakers on a sandy beach. Then it pattered the raindrops from the boughs over our heads, passed on, and was gone, and left all silent as before. What a stillness is the stillness of the bush: I have stood on a pitch-black, steaming night, and have been unable to hear a single sound for perhaps five minutes. Then you might hear an opossum scratch its way up a tree, and on its passage knock down a dead limb, which would fall with a crash. Then all would be quiet again, and you durst hardly breathe, "so stilly is the solitude." Poetry, by Scott; an old one but a good one. It is an eerie feeling. So it was that night, and even Flash Bill Hart felt

the influence and lay quite still. No one talked, and our pipes were out.

"Hush! what's that?" It was a stick breaking away through the pines; another and another; something heavy moving through the thick timber. Not one of the horses, surely; none of them would leave the mob by itself. It was a horse, though. Nearer it came and nearer, treading its way till the head and shoulders showed through the black pine boughs, clear and distinct in the red firelight. It was the blind mare. Only a moment did she hesitate before she stepped clear from the trees. Her ears were lying flat on her neck, and her sightless eyes gleamed yellow in the firelight. She was a gruesome sight as she walked across the firelit space towards where Peter was sitting. As she advanced she thrust her muzzle up and down, backwards and forward, as you have seen an elephant waving its trunk, snuffing the air. Peter sat staring at her like a man spellbound, and Bill and I were but little better. When she reached Peter's side she put her muzzle to his shoulder, and smelt him as a dog will smell a stranger. Then she raised her ugly head and whinnied with a trumpet note that went fairly through and through us. Three times she repeated it, and far away across the creek, I, for one, thought I heard an answering neigh. It may have been my own imagination—we were all off colour that night—but to me it seemed a horrid, guttural neigh, unlike the note of any horse I ever heard before or since.

Then the old brute turned and shamled off again into the darkness. Peter's nerves gave way with the style in which the brute treated him, and Peter was no cocktail. You have seen a child awake from a horrid dream and clutch its mother, and lose all self-control, overwhelmed by its fear. So Peter turned and clutched me, and holding me by the arm, his voice quivering, his eyes staring like one in a dream, and the sweat pouring off his livid face, he cried, just as a child might have done:

"What is it, Fred? What does she want? Tell me what she wants, quick, quick; my God, my God, what is it?"

I shook him roughly by the shoulders and talked in a very angry way to him, for nothing makes one so irritated as being in a funk, and I really was in a funk, I confess that; I couldn't help it. I felt in a blue, miserable, eerie, unaccountable funk. However, it pulled Peter up standing; he apologised for "playing the fool" as he said, thought it might be that new 'bacey we had been trying, or the tea, and so we lay down to rest, if not to sleep.

'I was about betimes in the morning. I had collared my hack, rounded up the team, fed them, and cleaned and oiled my harness before sunrise. Peter had left his blanket while I was hunting up the teams, and when I went to have a wash in the creek I found him standing melancholy and disconsolate beneath a big tree on the bank. He looked very ill, and had not slept a wink all night. Indeed, he had kept me constantly disturbed as well, tossing about, moaning and talking, until I had really felt very savage, not to say sulky.

"Cheer up, old man!" I said, as I stepped down the bank to have a souse in the water. "We'll be in to Wallandry to-morrow night, and you'll soon be all right again."

"It's no use, Fred, old boy, no use. That old brute tipped me the black spot, and there's no get away from it. See!" and he pointed theatrically to the dark stream.

*'Visendus ater flumine languido
Cocytus errans.*

"There it is; damn the old brute;" and he broke into a little hysterical half laugh, half sob.

'Our teams were standing at their feed with their harness on, and as soon as we had had our bite of breakfast we treble banked the three of them on to each waggon, and hauled the heavy loads over the creek and up the steep bank on the opposite side. It was a stirring little bit of work. The sun had come out in fitful gleams, and, by the time we had hauled the three waggons safely across, and were ready to start again, Bill and I had forgotten all about the old mare's warning, and the blood ran merrily through our veins. Not so Peter. His team was just in front of mine, and as he started away he looked over his shoulder, waved his hand, and called:

"Good-bye, Fred, it's all up, old boy."

"Tuts!" I shouted, "to Cocytus with ye, Peter; don't be a fool."

'Two hundred yards from the ford a rough side-track left the bank of the creek and zigzagged up the little ranges, the main track following the stream. For some unknown reason, perhaps because the going was firmer and less cut up, Peter turned his team up the zigzag, and as he did so he saw his tarpaulin was dangling loose at one corner of the tilt. He was up in a second, on the top of the load, making things snug—and it all happened in a moment. The team turned the first corner of the

zigzag too smartly, and the near side-wheels of the waggon struck the rising ground beside the track. Up they went, higher and higher, and I, behind, saw she must go. It was done in a flash. I saw Peter clutching at the tarpaulin as he skidded over the top of the load, and then, with legs and arms outstretched, he slipped over the edge and fell to the ground. With a creak and a groan, and one long, heavy, sickening lurch, the waggon toppled over, right on top of him as he lay, and the huge box of the wheel landed fair and square on the side of his head. I ran up, but nothing moved. The team, after one terrified jerk, were standing waiting for their master's orders. They had no master. I need not tell you what we found there when we unloaded and dug out all that was left of Peter from beneath the waggon. She weighed, with the load, a trifle over six tons.

"Then I caught my horse and galloped into Wallandry. Old McAllister was standing on the verandah, smoking his after-breakfast pipe, as I pulled up, pouring with sweat and horribly excited, for I was only a youngster.

"What's up, sonny?" he said.

"My mate's got crushed to death by the waggon, sir, over at the Black Dog Creek ford, and what am I to do?"

"Do! Is he deed?"

"Yes, sir, quite dead."

"Weel then, awa' and beery him; I canna help ye, laddie, nor him nither."

"But a certificate, sir. You're a J.P., ain't you?"

"Tuts; ye want no certificate. Awa' and beery him yonder in twa sheets o' bark." And so we did, like a black fellow; and last year I passed the place for the first time these twenty years. The Wallandry Hotel, a typical bush pub., covers the very spot. But Peter's rest is doubtless as deep as if he slept beneath the Wattle. Anyhow, he does not walk, and I for one am content to believe that his sleep is sound.'

That was Fred Huggat's story of the blind mare's foresight of death. He *did* believe in his yarn, after all; and, indeed, it is perfectly true, to my thinking. And he did not plagiarise it from St. Columba's pony, for though Fred, like many a man in the back blocks, is a bit of a scholar, he had certainly never read Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*. Yet here was this burly, mutton-fisted Englishman, under stars that Columba never knew, in the same tale with the brethren of Hy, in the little Atlantic island of saints.

W. H. L.

A Farmer's Year.

BEING HIS COMMONPLACE BOOK FOR 1898.

XIII.

The Results of Bungay Compost—Autumn Sunlight and Cloud—When the Strength Fails—The Beauty of Large Meadows—Another Way of Beet Lifting—The Clergy as Sportsmen—Loaders—Bean Roots—The Risks of Rabbit Pie—Sale of the Barley—The Battle of Lubwa—An Instance of Physical Endurance—The Triumph of Reason—The End of the Battle—African Rinderpest—Dividing the Spoils—Death of the Southdown Ram—A Visit to the Agricultural Show—Rearing of Prize Cattle—Fat Pigs—An Etruscan Winner—Queensland and Emigration—Prize Chrysanthemums—The Poultry Show—If only !—A Prophetic Passage—A Surgical Feat—Wild Ostriches—The Beet on Baker's—Carrots and Carrot Lifting—The Last of the Green Maize—The Uses of Road Grit—Sale of the Lambs—The Criminal Evidence Act—Mustard and the Sheep—The Cunning of Dogs—A Result of Bad Stacking—A Self-Planted Covert—Purchase of Steers—The Ways of Moles—A Story—An Agricultural Debate—The Lack of Labourers—Mr. Bagenal's Report—Exodus from the Land a National Question—Cattle at Norwich Market—Brutality of Drivers—The Cost of Carriage—Its Gravity—Warmth of the Season—The Harleston Auction—A Controversy—Prices at Harleston—The Dead of Winter—Ruin—The Patience of the Afflicted—An 'Old Radical.'

NOVEMBER 8.—Yesterday we began carting the beet from the top of the pit field, No. 23, and it is now that we see the results of that noble mixture, Bungay compost. I believe that there is half as much weight again per acre on this field as on any other root land that I farm. Moreover the beet, although not of the large, coarse variety, have defied the drought, and, in some instances at any rate, are perfect specimens of what high-class beet should be.

To-day the morning was very beautiful, nor during the whole year do I remember a scene of more singular and peaceful charm than that which I witnessed in the Buildings stack-yard. Bright sunshine poured upon the meadows beyond me, and high against the tender blue of the heavens wheeled the chattering daws. Perched on the surrounding trees, the loud-voiced rooks croaked solemnly, as is their fashion at this season, while a grey-breasted Royston crow, like the mischievous thief he is, sailed across the

field, searching the ground with his keen eyes in the hope of finding carrion or some sick and wounded thing which he could peck to death. At the sound of the gate as I shut it the ewes looked up and ran forward in the eager hope of being led to fresh supplies of food, but not recognising in me their accustomed guide, stopped and began to crop the grass with a redoubled energy to make up for the moment they had lost. Hopping on the ground between them was a flock of starlings, whose jewelled plumage shone in the sunlight. Some of these were even perched upon the sheep's backs and, declining to be frightened away, clung to the wool with their claws, their wings outspread to steady themselves while the creatures moved. It was curious to see these industrious birds hunting for insects, ticks I presume, which were hidden in the fleeces of their hosts. One tick, I observed, was very obdurate and gave a starling much trouble, for it pulled at it as a thrush pulls at a worm upon the garden grass. Near to me also, poised upon a white-thorn bough covered with brilliant haws, sat a robin, watching everything that passed with his beady eye, his little head cocked on one side in search, no doubt, of some opportunity of profit to himself. It is curious, by the way, now that the foliage grows thinner and winter is at hand, how one begins to notice the red breasts of the robins. In summer they catch the eye but seldom.

Then suddenly this brilliance of colour and these many sounding voices of beasts and birds passed away, for a cloud drifted over the face of the sun, and, behold! all the landscape grew dead and ashen, and all the birds were still. The daws ceased their chattering and the rooks croaked no more, the heavy shape of the Royston crow vanished from sight among the trees of the Vineyard slope, the robin flew off with a disappointed chirp, and even the bright haws seemed to lose their brilliant hues and to become merged in the sombre tints of the autumn foliage. Only the sheep fed on eagerly, as they feed day and night, heedless of the season or the changes of the weather. Sheep are practical creatures, with no time to waste in sentiment.

On the road to-day I met an old fellow, a very handsome man with clear-cut features, whose face I know well although I forget his name. He stopped me, and in a melancholy quavering voice said that he had a favour to ask. The favour was that he desired to be informed whether I could allot him parish relief. He was seventy-five, he told me, and could no longer work as his strength had left him, so that unless he could get relief he must take

refuge in the House. I gave him such information as I could, and went away sorrowful. I have already commented on these cases, and there is nothing more to be said about them.

November 10.—Yesterday I was shooting with a friend at Earsham, and spent a very enjoyable day knocking through outlying spinneys and doubling hedgerows for pheasants. We had one or two partridge drives also, the guns standing in large grass meadows, which in past times were a deer-park and belonged to the old Dukes of Norfolk. On a lovely day such as this was these great meadows look very beautiful, fringed as they are with tall, uncut hedgerows, wherein grow occasional stunted oaks and maple trees, now splendid in their yellow autumn dress. Here too the field-fares chattered, congratulating themselves, doubtless, upon their safe arrival from over seas.

To-day is fine, but misty, and we are getting off the root from the All Hallows field, No. 29. These beet are of a longer variety than those which we have grown elsewhere, and, being easier to grasp, are not dealt with in the same way. Instead of pulling them first and leaving them in lines to be tossed into the cart, a man goes down the rows, deftly cutting off the tops to the right and left with his sickle, but leaving the bulbs standing in the ground. After him follows the cart, and the pullers, dragging the beet from the soil with a quick and practised movement, throw them straight into it. This process is harder work, but, where the conditions make it practicable, it saves a good deal of time.

November 12.—Yesterday we were shooting in Tindale Wood, a great covert of about 120 acres, which even now, however, is very thick with leaf, some of the undergrowth being almost as green as though we were still in the month of June. This quantity of foliage, even if one can see the creatures, makes hare and rabbit-shooting rather dangerous, as it is difficult to know when the beaters are close at hand. However, nobody was shot, perhaps because we had no clergymen among our party. Great as is my respect for the clergy, although there are exceptions (I myself know one), I confess that I am not fond of going out shooting with them, since, on these occasions, they are apt to display too active a trust in a watching Providence. When I was a young fellow there lived in our neighbourhood a retired naval chaplain, who, in private life, was a most delightful old gentleman, but who, when armed with a gun, became a perfect terror. On one occasion I was joining a party of shooters who were advancing up a turnip field, and, seeing among them my reverend friend, I was par-

ticularly careful to show myself and call out to him. When he arrived within about twenty yards of me, however, a partridge rose at his feet and flew straight past me, whereon, without the slightest hesitation, he sent first one barrel and then the other slap into the fence within about a foot of my face.

'Mr. B., Mr. B.,' I exclaimed reproachfully, 'you very nearly shot me dead.'

Oh,' he grunted in answer, 'shouldn't have been there, you know; shouldn't have been there!'

On another occasion this same old gentleman nearly blew the middle out of one of my brothers, indeed he only escaped the charge by doubling himself up with wonderful rapidity. After that experience we dared not ask him to shoot any more. This gave him great offence, as he believed that the omission was due to personal reasons. It is very difficult to make the dangerous man understand what a thing of fear he is to all his neighbours.

Here is another reminiscence of a parsonic sportsman. The parson and a friend entered at the top of a long covert with a view to walking down it in line and shooting rabbits, while I stood at the bottom waiting for pheasants. There were a good many shots fired in the covert, varied by occasional shouts, and at last my friend staggered out at the end looking very hot and flustered.

'You had some shooting there,' I said.

'Shooting?' he answered in a fury. 'That infernal parson had the shooting. He has been firing at my legs all the way down the covert, and *I've been jumping the shot.*'

Afterwards this reverend gentleman very nearly shot me also in mopping up a low pheasant, which no man ought to have fired at.

Once I knew another clergyman who went out ferreting with a companion, and, turning suddenly, aimed at that companion's boot and hit it. When remonstrated with he said that he thought it was a rabbit. However, he was only a curate, from whom caution could not be expected.

Next to the clergy I think that naval lieutenants are the most dangerous, for they return fresh from abroad, where they have been accustomed to shoot with nobody within a square mile of them; though perhaps the palm ought to be given to shortsighted and peppery generals who chance to be jealous shots. I imagine, however, that sportsmen run more risks from their loaders than from companions, no matter how careless, who are rarely near enough to shoot them dead. I shall not readily forget one such experience.

Needing a loader, I retained one for the next day's shoot, a gentleman with a statuesque countenance and a beautiful white beard, who informed me that he had loaded for Lord Walsingham. At the first hot corner, as my second gun was not handed to me when I wanted it, I looked around, to perceive the party who had loaded for Lord Walsingham fumbling at it blindly with both hands, a loaded cartridge sticking out of each corner of his *mouth*. I ought to have dismissed him then and there, but accepted some explanation. At the very next stand, just as I had shot a high pheasant and was watching it fall, I heard an explosion at my side and saw a charge of shot strike the ground in front of my feet. My white-bearded friend had managed to discharge the gun which he was loading in such a fashion that the whole charge must have passed within an inch or so of my thigh.

For the rest of that day I shot with one gun ; moreover, I took to shooting with hammerless guns, which are much safer. On the other hand, the great carefulness of a loader under confusing circumstances, when a faulty gun exploded in his hands, once saved me from a terrible accident. No story that I know, however, of the mistakes of loaders can equal that authentic tale told to me by Lord Walsingham, of how, when shooting with three guns, the trigger of one of them was accidentally pulled while its loaded muzzle was pointing at the small of his back. It may be asked how he survived. He survived because out of all the hundreds of cartridges he used that day, this particular cartridge was the only one that missed fire !

We only bagged one woodcock in Tindale and saw but two. In most seasons this wood is a favourite haunt of these beautiful birds, and I have known as many as eight or ten killed in going through it.

To-day, while we were partridge driving, I picked up on a field a bean seedling, self-sown no doubt, which had been harrowed up in preparing the land for wheat. It is very curious to observe the process of root formation in the bean. First the thick white root pushes from the seed, and then from it and not from the bean itself, indeed about an eighth of an inch below it, starts the vigorous upward growth which develops into the plant. Although in this particular instance seedling and root were each about four inches long, the parent bean remained quite sound and unaltered in flavour.

I notice that on the light lands the rabbits have done a good deal of mischief this year. They are numerous this season, and I

suppose that the drought made them crave anything with juice in it. Talking of rabbits reminds me of an alarming tale which a friend who is staying here told me yesterday. A few weeks ago his brother, while riding a bicycle, was seized with the most frightful anguish in the region of the heart. He managed, however, to stagger to his home and send for a doctor. The seizure proved to be the beginning of an attack of *angina pectoris*, so severe that he nearly died of it. When he got better he went with all precautions to London to interview a specialist, who, to his enormous relief, for he thought himself a doomed man, told him that his heart was perfectly sound. Investigations followed, and it was discovered that his attack was brought on by eating cold rabbit pie, which produced some peculiar form of ptomaine poisoning. It appears that all pies if unventilated are dangerous, but that cold rabbit pie in these circumstances is apt to be absolutely deadly.

We have sold the barley we thrashed the other day—about a hundred coombs—at seventeen shillings the coomb. I am rather proud to hear from the buyer, a gentleman of experience who handles a vast quantity of barley, that some of this barley—that which was grown on the Ape field, I think—is in his opinion the best which this district has produced this year. He priced it at seventeen and sixpence, but as the rest was somewhat inferior, averaged the lot at seventeen shillings. With the exception of a neighbour who, as I think I have mentioned, realised eighteen shillings or eighteen and sixpence for a few coombs which he thrashed on the harvest field, seventeen and sixpence is, I believe, as high a price as has been obtained in my neighbourhood this season.

Among many other flowers heliotrope is still growing and blooming with vigour in the garden. For the 12th of November this is, I think, unusual.

November 13.—To-day a friend, Mr. F. J. Jackson, who has just arrived in this country from East Africa, came to pay me a visit. Mr. Jackson, who is a Government Commissioner in the Uganda territories, played a very active part in the recent fighting with the Soudanese mutineers, in the course of which he was desperately wounded. The main battle, in which he met with his hurt, that took place at a spot called Lubwa, must indeed have been one of the most fearful struggles that has happened in any part of our Empire for many years, and although in the end the white men came off victorious, their loss in killed and wounded was heavy. They had a position upon a slight slope, but without

cover beyond what was afforded by a few bushes and ant-heaps. Here they lay supported only by seventeen Sikhs from an Indian regiment and a great mob of Swahili porters, who were expected to bolt at any moment.

The Soudanese enemy attacked them in enormously superior force—they numbered about three to one—and with all proper military precautions. Advancing up the slope, they partially out-flanked the Englishmen, so that for some hours the two forces seem to have been pounding away at each other at a distance of from a hundred to forty yards.

Towards the beginning of this book I mentioned the extraordinary insensibility to pain and shock shown by animals and some races of men. Here is a strange example of it which occurred in this fight as it was told to me by Mr. Jackson. One of the leaders of the mutineers, a captain, whose name was, I think, Suleiman Effendi, made a rush at the opening of the fight and got quite close to the British position, whereon Mr. Jackson and three other people fired at him at a distance of about thirty yards and down he went. As the bullet which Mr. Jackson had discharged was a split sporting bullet such as is used to kill game rapidly, and as he knew that he had hit the man fair in the middle, and other pressing matters claimed his attention, he troubled no more about him. Presently, however, his gun-bearer exclaimed, 'Look out, sir, Suleiman Effendi is shooting.' He looked and saw the man resting on one elbow and drawing a cartridge from his belt with which to reload the rifle he had just discharged. Before he could fire again this unconquerable savage was shot through the head. It will scarcely be believed that after the battle was over it was found that this man had four bullets in his vitals, any one of which must have rapidly caused death, as each of the wounds was mortal. Yet he had kept his presence of mind and courage, and had been able to load and fire his rifle.

A while after this Mr. Jackson was struck himself. It seems that one of the enemy, who was a good shot, had crept round to a position a little behind him and about forty yards away, whence he is believed to have killed young Mr. Fielding, who, bravely but incautiously, exposed himself by climbing on to an ant-heap. Presently Mr. Jackson was aware of a bullet striking before his face and of a disturbance of his clothes. Thinking, naturally, that the shot had been fired from in front, he lifted himself a little to search for the firer, when suddenly he felt a most frightful blow under the armpit, as though a very powerful man had kicked him

with all his strength, and knew that the blood was pouring from his mouth. The facts were, of course, that the first bullet had also come from behind and passed through his coat without touching his body, whereas the second, which was better aimed, struck him somewhere below the right shoulder-blade, flattened on the ribs, and passed through him, piercing the lung, and falling out into his shirt, where it was found. This bullet he showed me ; it came from a Snider, weighs an ounce and a quarter, and in its flattened condition is of the size of a two-shilling piece ; indeed, it is a mystery how a man through whose lung it had passed could be sitting before me alive and well. He tells me, however, that in his own opinion he owes his life to a curious circumstance which, to my mind, is a strange instance of the triumph of the reason of man under conditions of unusual difficulty.

Mr. Jackson is a great sportsman and has killed large quantities of big game, from elephants down. Many of these animals were, of course, shot through the lungs, and he had noticed that when this happened, death frequently occurred through the creature trying to cough up the blood and choking in the effort. From the moment that he was struck at Lubwa he was convinced that the bullet had passed through his lung, and, remembering the example furnished by the game, he determined not to cough until the severed blood vessels had been given time to close. This resolve, by agonising efforts, he succeeded more or less in putting into practice. The result was, that after lying in grave danger for some days, his wound healed, and in about two months he recovered.

As the subject has been touched on, a short account of the issue of the fight will be interesting. After hours of struggle, during which the Soudanese made five separate advances, Major Macdonald, the officer in command, finding that the available ammunition was reduced to a few rounds per man, followed the example of the great Duke at Waterloo, and ordered a charge. The enemy, not being aware of our desperate straits as regards cartridges, gave way, and retired to the fort, where they brutally murdered their three white prisoners—Major Thruston and Messrs. Wilson and Scott. Thus victory upon that terrible field remained with the white men and those of the indomitable Sikhs who were left alive. It is another instance, if after Chitral one is wanted, of what Englishmen can do when they are put to proof, whether they be trained to arms or mere undisciplined civilians. When it is needed, the innate martial spirit, the endurance and deter-

mination that are bred in their blood, answer to the calls of circumstance and duty, and they do what must be done or die in the effort. It is this resourceful and unquenched spirit which, from generation to generation, has made our race so great.

The man who shot Mr. Jackson, it is believed, was himself shot or very seriously wounded. Under the tree where he had taken up his station were found two heaps of cartridge cases—for he had a spare gun and a loader—and a pool of blood. His body, however, was not found; probably he was severely hurt, and carried away by his comrades.

To turn to a subject which, if less warlike and exciting, has more to do with farming interests, Mr. Jackson gave me some very interesting details as to the working and ravages of rinderpest. This dreadful cattle disease, as many readers will remember, is supposed to have begun in East Africa, whence it travelled south, destroying kine, and even game, by the million, and spreading ruin with an equal hand among Kaffirs and white men. The plague first struck East Africa in the year 1890, and having killed everything there was to kill—the Masai and other tribes were reduced to absolute starvation by its onslaught, and even the buffalo were practically exterminated—it passed southward. Last year, however, it was unhappily re-introduced by some infected oxen that were driven from the coast, and again killed off many thousands of cattle which had been bred up since the first pest. Mr. Jackson himself, who was living in the Mau district, possessed a herd of two hundred and fifty cows. The disease smote them, and, when it left, but twenty-five remained alive.

It is now so long since we have had rinderpest in England that a description of its symptoms may be of value. They are—at any rate in East Africa—dry nose, with loss of cud and ulcerated gums, while post-mortem examination reveals inflamed and ulcerated intestines, and a gall bladder swollen to the size of a soda-water bottle, although the lungs appear to be quite healthy. The sickness does its work very quickly. In the morning the animal will, to all appearance, be in a state of perfect health and grazing as usual, indeed the stomach is generally found to be full of half-digested food. Suddenly it ceases eating, and stands a while with a hanging head, after which it lies down, and about five hours later expires. I have myself seen cases of African horse-sickness run their course with equal rapidity, but I presume that in both instances the fatal germs have been at work for some days, although they make no outward show. This, however, is pure

conjecture, whereof the truth or falsity could only be proved by the frequent testing of the temperature of the animal, if, indeed, this precaution would suffice to prove it.

Although in the 1890 epidemic, in addition to the buffalo, eland, giraffe, lesser kudoo, and wart-hog died in great numbers throughout East Africa, curiously enough, so far as can be ascertained, the last outbreak does not seem to have affected these animals.

November 16.—Yesterday I received a cheque for 7*l.* 12*s.*, being the net amount due to me for prizes taken at the Lothingland Agricultural Show. This sum, after deducting the expenses to which we were put in sending the animals for exhibition, I propose to divide among Hood, his wife, Moore, and the men and boys who were employed in looking after the cattle.

The weather is very damp and quiet, and we are now engaged in getting off the mangolds on Baker's, No. 44.

As he showed no signs of recovery, the old Southdown ram, which, as I think I have said, was injured some time ago, was sent yesterday to graze in the Elysian fields. His mortal remains are now being distributed among the farm labourers at a cost of threepence the pound, and I daresay that, if boiled long enough, they will make very good soup. Although his shoulder is found to have been dislocated, it cannot have troubled the creature much, or prevented him from feeding, as his condition is good.

Two pigs have accompanied him to the Shades. A pig is the only animal which looks more attractive dead than alive; then, for the first time in his career, he is white and clean.

At Bedingham, to-day, I found that the beet have all been lifted and haled. The men are carting flashings from the hedgerows into heaps for burning, which it is useless to keep till another year to serve as stack-bottoms, since by that time they would have rotted. Moore is ploughing up the root land, the two young horses, which have come in very satisfactorily, working half a day apiece. This is as much as they ought to do at present.

November 18.—To-day I went to Norwich to see the Agricultural Show. I cannot pretend that an agricultural show held under a roof is a particularly pleasant place to linger in; there are too many smells and too much noise. The red-poll classes were strong, the fat steers being, some of them, magnificent animals. As was to be expected, the executors of the lamented Mr. Colman took a large proportion of the prizes. Out of their great herds they are able to pick and choose; moreover, in

such establishments the rearing of cattle for show is almost a business. From birth till they appear upon the bench every delicacy which they can be persuaded to eat is crammed down the throats of these pampered animals, together with liberal draughts of new milk. Hood tells me that when he was in the service of a gentleman in the Shires, they reared a short-horn steer that took the first prizes at some of the largest shows in England. In addition to all his other nutriment, this creature was accustomed to have a bucket of new milk given to him every day, with admirable results on his condition. Such treatment means a large expenditure, with a very problematical return in the way of advertisement; indeed, as I think I have said elsewhere, I doubt whether it pays the small man to compete at these great shows, however good may be his stock.

At first sight to-day an observer at the Show might have thought that the condition of the various cattle exhausted the possibilities of fat, but a visit to the pig department would have proved him to be utterly mistaken. What monsters were these! and how in the name of Barley-meal do they manage even to move under such a weight of adipose deposit? Perhaps they do not move, perhaps they are carried; anyhow, the operation had tired them, and they were all asleep. By the way, it is a fact worth recording that the ancients had an excellent breed of pig. This I know, because I have an Etruscan vase in my possession on which is painted the picture of what I take to be the pig that, on some occasion before the founding of Rome, had won the cup, or rather the bowl, at the local show in Etruria; a supposition that seems to be borne out by the garlands of oak leaves and acorns with which he is encircled, and the rosettes that are painted above him. At least, if he did not win the prize, he ought to have done so, for really he is an admirably proportioned animal, in magnificent condition, short and thick, with a regular Berkshire head, and pure white in colour.

In one of the galleries of the Hall the Queensland Government has a stall, set there doubtless to attract the intending emigrant. I must say that it attracted me. Such heads of Indian corn, such samples of wheat and barley—the latter a little pale-coloured perhaps. The gentleman at the stall gave me a bundle of literature, which I perused all the way home, with the result that by the time I reached Ditchingham I felt inclined to book a passage for Queensland by the next steamer. A country which is twice the size of the German Empire, with a nice warm

climate and a death-rate of only 12·10 per thousand, where anything will grow, from a pineapple to a cabbage, where horses, sheep, and cattle flourish, where, in short, nothing is lacking except the many and varied plagues of Africa—what could a man want more? Moreover, there the land is dirt cheap, and arranged in lots to suit all purses; and—best of everything—the British flag flies over it, with nobody to question its supremacy.

What says the little book which was given to me? 'Foreign competition, high rents, bad seasons, &c., &c., render the cultivator's life here an unending effort to keep his head above water. Why not close the conflict, and go to a land where labour and money, properly invested, are sure to return good interest?' Many will be inclined to echo the question. Why not, indeed? But I hold no brief for Queensland, of which I know little. Doubtless it has its drawbacks, like other places. Within the giant circle of the British Empire are several such favoured lands, whose fertility and wholesomeness literally cry aloud to man to take his profit from them.

What I *do* hold a brief for, what I *do* venture to preach, and to almost every class, is emigration. Why should people continue to be cooped up in this narrow country, living generally upon insufficient means, when yonder their feet might be set in so large a room? Why do they not go to where families can be brought into the world without the terror that if they are brought into the world they will starve or drag their parents down to the dirt; to where the individual may assert himself and find room to develop his own character, instead of being crushed in the mould of custom till, outwardly at any rate, he is as like his fellows as one brick is like the others in a wall? Here, too, unless he be endowed with great ability, abnormal powers of work, and an iron constitution, he has about as much chance of rising as the brick at the bottom has of getting to the top of the wall, for the weight of the thousands above keep him down, and the conventions of a crowded and ancient civilisation tie his hands and fetter his thought. But in those new homes across the seas it is different, for there he can draw nearer to nature, and, though the advantages of civilisation remain unforfeited, to the happy conditions of the simple uncomplicated man. There, if he be of gentle birth, his sons can go to work among the cattle without losing caste, instead of being called upon to begin where their father left off, or pay the price in social damage; there his daughters will marry and help to build up some great empire of the future,

instead of dying single in a land where marriage is becoming more and more a luxury for the rich. Decidedly emigration has its advantages, and if I were young again I would practise what I preach.

When I had satisfied myself with a vision of fat beasts, I went on to the Chrysanthemum Show at St. Andrew's Hall. I suppose that it is my bad taste, but although I am a great lover of flowers, I cannot say that I care for prize chrysanthemums. They are like our society—too highly cultivated, too much developed from the primitive type, and, with all their infinite variety, suggesting a curious sense of sameness.

As one may as well do a thing thoroughly while about it, after the chrysanthemums I marched to the Poultry Show. It was my first visit to one of these exhibitions, and, unless for some very special purpose, I incline to the opinion that it will be my last, for here the odours are pungent, while the noise is absolutely deafening, for every cock in the place is fiercely set upon crowing down about three hundred and fifty other cocks. One of these birds showed extraordinary intelligence. There he stood in his box with his head laid sideways on the floor. I thought that he must be very sick, and watched him; but presently he lifted himself up and crowed most furiously. Clearly the creature was like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears, only he stopped his ears to make himself deaf, being, like myself, overpowered by the execrable noise.

I never knew before that cocks grew to such a size—indeed, some of the birds at the Norwich Show reminded me of young ostriches, fowls of which I know something, for I have farmed them. Once, with a friend, I rode to a distant stead in the Transvaal, where we invested our little all—or most of it—in ostriches, of which a shrewd and progressive Boer wished to be rid. There were six or eight of them, and they cost about three hundred pounds, for at that time the ostrich market was tight—in the Transvaal. For the same sum, or a little more, I have no doubt that in those days of cheap land we might have bought the whole farm. Had we done so, I suppose, if a plethora of wealth had still left me alive, that instead of writing books in the country I should now be entertaining foreign Royalties in a marble palace in Park Lane, for that farm lies in the centre of the Rand district, and I have heard that the best reefs run through it. And yet, although my vision failed me in this instance—why are there not gold *dousers* as well as water *dousers*?—I must have been a youth of some foresight. Here is a passage written by me in 1876, when

I was a lad of twenty. For a first effort in prophecy it has proved fairly accurate, especially as I cannot have had much to go on, for in those days few people looked upon the bankrupt South African Republic as a country of any value :

‘It is very difficult to convey an impression of the intense dreariness and monotony of the great Transvaal wastes, “where wilds immeasurably spread seem lengthening as we go.” Day after day the traveller passes over vast spaces of rolling veld stretching away north, south, east, and west, without a tree, a house, or any sign of man, save here and there a half-beaten waggon track. And yet those wastes, now so dismal and desolate, are at no distant date destined to support and enrich a large population ; for underneath their surface lie all minerals in abundance, and when the coal of England and of Europe is exhausted, there is sufficient stored up here to stock the world. Those plains, too, which for centuries have lain idle and unproductive, will before long supply the greatest corn markets with grain ; for, save in some places where water is scarce, the virgin soil is rich beyond comparison. Yes, before us lies the country of the practical future, of the days when the rich man will have his estate in Switzerland to gratify his eyes, and his estate in the Transvaal to fill his pockets. This vast land will one day be the garden of Africa, the land of gems and gold, of oil and corn, of steam-ploughs and railways. It has an assured and a magnificent future.’

Ostriches are disappointing birds. Ours steadily declined to lay eggs ; but by way of compensation their kicking powers were perfectly unrivalled, indeed I have seen one of them cause a strong man to perform cart-wheels like a street arab. Also they were subject to unreasonable panics, in the course of which they charged fences and broke their expensive necks. Once, under pressure of necessity, we performed tracheotomy on an ostrich—a terrible and exhausting operation. The creature had swallowed a bone about eight inches long, which became fixed across his gullet. As it would move neither up nor down, with the help of four picked Kaffirs and a razor we held him and hewed out the obstruction. Strange to say, he recovered from this delicate surgical feat, but by an evil fate a few months later he swallowed another bone, which stuck in the same place. This we were unable to remove, and the ostrich died.

One of the most beautiful sights that I ever saw is that of these birds in their wild state floating away across the vast plains till their snowy plumes are lost in the dim blue of the

sky-line. This and the spectacle of the Transvaal veld black with thousands upon thousands of trekking game are things that I am glad to have beheld, especially as the last of them will never be seen again. And so farewell to ostriches, which to me furnish no happy memories.

On the farm we are still getting off beet, in much colder weather, for the wind has turned to the east.

November 19.—The beet on Baker's, No. 44, have proved a better crop than might have been expected, when the poor state of the land and the rather thin plant are taken into consideration. From the seven acres of them we have carted about one hundred and forty loads, which must represent not far short of twenty tons to the acre, or, to be on the safe side, let us say eighteen tons—a not unsatisfactory return.

We have begun digging the carrots—for the soil is too tight to allow of their being pulled—which have grown upon the Thwaite field. There are an acre and three-quarters of them, with some parsnips mixed in, and I reckon the weight at about thirteen tons. A good crop should run to ten tons the acre, so, if this estimate is correct, we are five or six tons short of what we might have hoped to get. This shortage is mainly due to the ravages of the accursed rabbit, which persistently ate out the crowns of the young plants. Also the summer has been too dry for the successful growth of carrots, which show the result of the lack of rain in the fanginess of the root, caused by their starting into fresh growth when moisture fell after a long period of drought. For the same reason a good many of them have run to seed. A carrot cannot grow top and bottom at the same time, therefore when they go to seed there is little or no root, all the virtue of the plant being absorbed in the reproductive process. Even if left to stand, this seed would come to nothing. To secure it in a fertile condition, the carrots should be lifted and haled in autumn, for, if left in the ground, a severe frost will perish them. In the spring they must be taken from the hale and planted in good soil, when they will produce a plentiful crop of seed.

The tops of the carrots are being cut off and left upon the ground, on which, as it was not manured last year, we propose to fold the sheep, that devour them greedily, together with the swede heads from the top portion of the field, which will be carted down to provide them with a little extra sustenance.

To-day we are delivering the barley which we sold to the maltsters.

The last stalks of our green maize have been eaten. It has furnished us with a very valuable bite of succulent food, and that it should have lasted so long in good condition is a striking testimony to the openness of the season, for mealies will not stand frost.

November 21.—To-day is dull with a drizzling rain, not heavy enough, however, to prevent us from drilling wheat on the little bit of land which has been ploughed after the maize was cleared. We are carting also grit gathered from the road to spread about upon the surface of the seven-acre pasture, No. 10. This stuff seems to be a perquisite of the road-scraping men, at any rate when it is collected in the streets of the village, as we buy it from them at eighteenpence the load. If, on the other hand, it is laid up against the banks, it belongs to the owner of the adjacent soil. Road-grit, containing as it does all manner of finely pulverised refuse, is very valuable as a dressing for pasture land. Also it can be put to good advantage by using it in the holes where young apple-trees are being planted, especially if the soil beneath is clay, as the roots find it very 'kind' to work in.

The score or so of lambs which, with the help of a little cake, have been fattening on this pasture, No. 10, are now all sold to the butcher, as we have come to the conclusion that the cross with the Southdown produces an animal too small to breed from. The largest of them fetched thirty-eight shillings, and the smaller, which are pure Southdown, thirty shillings. It is not a very high price, but on the whole we are well rid of them.

November 24.—Yesterday and the day before the weather was a good deal colder, but this morning it is rough and mild. Two ploughs are going on the farm, and the carrot-lifting and the earthing up of the beet still continue.

At the Bench to-day we had our first experience of the new Criminal Evidence Act, of the provisions of which in each case the defendant elected to avail himself, with the result that they one and all proceeded to give themselves gracefully away. I have seen this Act a good deal criticised, but my own opinion, for what it is worth, is that it will prove a very useful measure, and ensure the conviction of a great many guilty people who would otherwise have been acquitted, and the escape, or, at any rate, the complete clearing of the characters, of some innocent people, who might otherwise have been left under a cloud of suspicion. Few accused persons, at least among the classes with which magistrates have to deal, will, I believe, be able to resist the temptation of going into the box and giving evidence on oath, however guilty they may know them-

selves to be. Once there the result is sure, for my experience is that such persons break down at once under a cross-examination conducted by a trained intellect. The two objections to the Act seem to me to be that it will cause an enormous amount of extra perjury, and that if a defendant elects not to go into the box, having had the opportunity of doing so, whatever judge or counsel may urge, the mind of the jury will very likely be prejudiced against him.

As to the first of these two points, it may be answered that people who perjure themselves, even on their own behalf, are liable to prosecution and penal servitude. But will such prosecutions be instituted, and, if they are instituted, will any jury be found to convict a man who, on his oath or out of it, has told lies to save his liberty? I am convinced that they would acquit him, on the general principle that it is only to be expected that a rat in a corner will try to escape by any means open to it.

The view of Mr. Justice Hawkins, whose opinion is entitled, I suppose, to as much or more weight than that of anybody else in England, seems to be that the prisoner charged before the magistrates with an indictable offence ought not to go into the box in their court, insomuch as they are not trying him, but merely investigating the charge to see whether there is a case against him strong enough to be sent for trial. This is all very well, though some authorities take a rather wider view of the duties of magistrates—but, under the words of the Act, if a defendant insists upon giving evidence at petty sessions, or anywhere else, I do not quite see how he is to be prevented. Then, of course, arises the question as to whether or no his cross-examination should be allowed. However, I suppose that all these points will be settled sooner or later by the wisdom of those above.

One man amused me to-day. He was up for an indictable offence, and having elected to be dealt with under the Summary Jurisdiction Act, expressed a wish to give evidence.

'Well,' I asked him, when he had been sworn, 'what have you to say?'

'If you please, sir,' he replied gravely, '*I stole the fowl.*'

November 25.—The mild and open weather continues, and we have three ploughs going, two of them on No. 22 and one on Baker's, No. 43. After breakfast I walked down to the All Hallows field, No. 37, half of which, it may be remembered, was under layer hay, while the other half bore a crop of pease. Some mustard seed was harrowed in onto the pea stubble, but when I

returned from Scotland it looked to me as though it would not furnish a day's bite for the sheep. Still, it lived through the drought, and now, under the influence of the recent rain, has thrown up quite a fair crop, on which the ewes are being penned at night. In the daytime both they and the cows run on the hay stubble alongside the mustard, where there is still a good deal of excellent feed, although two crops have been cut from it. It is most amusing to watch these animals, which one and all naturally wish to get to the mustard, with the result that the boy in charge has an exceedingly lively time. First the cows make for it with quiet determination. He rushes to turn them, whereon the sheep see their opportunity and slip in at the other end of the line. I think that by nightfall this boy must be very tired, for it is almost impossible to restrain a flock of experienced ewes which see something tasty in front of them. Indeed, ours had to be removed from the Pithole field, on to which they were turned to clean up the beet tops, as, notwithstanding the herd's efforts, they broke continually into the swedes and white turnips, doing them a good deal of damage.

It was funny also to note the behaviour of a little terrier dog named Di which accompanied me. Di is terrified of sheep, which chase her (she will kill *lambs* if she gets the chance), but in order to avoid showing her fear by beating a humble retreat, she bolted to the fence and began to hunt an imaginary rabbit all the way round it, being careful to keep on the further side until she reached the road again. For cunning humbug few animals can beat a dog, which is a creature that hates to be laughed at.

On my way home I noticed that, owing to the indifferent stacking, the large wheat stack in All Hallows yard has sunk so much that it is nearly falling over. Indeed, the poles by which it is supported have pushed up the roof in bulges, so great is the weight upon them.

I hear to-day that the man whom we hired at Bedingham is leaving again, having found a place as groom and gardener to a clergyman. I am glad for his sake, for the work is easier, and the pay—probably—better; but where we are to find another I know not, as the young men in this year of grace absolutely decline to labour on the land.

November 29.—Saturday and Monday were very wet and wretched, but for my part I am glad to see some rain. To-day I have been out shooting in a charming natural covert among the marshes, by which I mean a covert that does not seem to have

been planted by man. The holly-trees in it especially are beautiful, and covered with brilliant red berries.

We have bought six little steers from a neighbouring farmer, aged from ten months to a year old, at the price of 4*l.* 10*s.* apiece. This strain of animals has some of our own blood in it, and therefore I prefer them to promiscuous home-breds. They have gone to Bedingham for the winter.

To-day also I handed over the 7*l.* 12*s.* that we won in prizes—or rather 5*l.* 2*s.* of it, for the rest went in expenses—to be divided up according to scale.

As I was walking from one stand to another while out shooting this afternoon I came across a mole that, on hearing us—for I believe that these creatures cannot see—instantly began to burrow into the bank. In from two to three seconds its fat black body had nearly vanished, for it seemed to sink into the soil much as a hot iron sinks into snow. To pull it out needed considerable force, and I fear gave the poor little thing a great fright, for, after this experience, it just covered itself with loose soil and began to squeak loudly. I asked the beaters not to kill it, so I hope that by now it has recovered its nerve.

My host told me a good story. At a big shoot a guest of his was given an old keeper as a loader—a man of somewhat caustic wit. The guest was not shooting well that day, and although he fired freely very little happened. After a hot corner the man with the game-cart asked the disgusted loader if he wanted any more cartridges.

'Keertridges,' he was heard to reply, 'no bōr; take 'em away. Keertridges ain't no use to us!' Half the joke, however, lies in the intonation, which it is impossible to reproduce, rising *crescendo* till the last word is uttered in a modified scream.

December 3.—December has opened with rough weather, and yesterday the wind rose steadily, till at nightfall it blew a gale, before which, at sunset, gorgeous-coloured clouds went driving past like the chariots of a host celestial.

To-day I went to Norwich to attend a meeting of the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, of which I am a member. The subject under discussion was that of 'Better methods of remunerating skilled agricultural labour,' which was introduced in an interesting speech by Mr. Lee Warner, and dwelt upon in its various aspects by other gentlemen.

If I may criticise, however, it seemed to me that the debate turned too much upon such matters as technical instruction,

benefit societies, ploughing matches, &c. Piece-work also was discussed, some of the speakers being in its favour and some against it. As regards ploughing and thatching competitions, my experience is that it is not easy to persuade labourers—who are a suspicious folk—to enter their names for them. I remember a good many years ago that, with some difficulty, one of my own men was induced to compete for a prize for stack-building. It never even entered his mind that there was a possibility of fair dealing in the matter.

‘I doubt they’ll give that to their own people,’ he said to me, shaking his head; and, as it happened, by bad luck, I believe that they did. My friend did not seem in the least surprised, but I do not think that he will go in for any more competitions. Kissing, in the opinion of the agricultural labourer, goes very much by favour. Moreover, as a class, they are sensitive, and dislike the idea of failing. ‘But how dreadful it would be if I didn’t win,’ said a certain good lady to me the other day when I urged her to show her butter. Fortunately she did win.

Before the meeting broke up I ventured to point out that in my view these questions went much deeper than had been suggested, being rooted, indeed, in the prevailing agricultural depression. Surely the matter of skilled labour is an economic matter, and it is leaving the land, not for lack of technical instruction, benefit societies with money prizes, or village flower-shows, but because the land can no longer afford to pay the able-bodied and active labourer a sufficient wage to tempt him to stay upon it. It must never be forgotten that the lot of the agricultural labourer is part and parcel of the lot of agriculture. There used to be plenty of labour upon the land when the land was prosperous; now that its prosperity has departed there is little, and the inference is plain. The young men are not learning the trade; they are drifting to the towns or elsewhere, leaving the old or the unfit to do the work, and ultimately to increase the rates.

That this is no fancy can be proved by anyone who takes the trouble to walk over my own or other farms and see how large is the proportion of elderly men employed upon them. The young fellow who can plough and thatch and milk, as his father did, is indeed a *rara avis* to-day. This cry of the scarcity of labour is to be heard in every direction—one can hardly open a country newspaper without seeing some allusion to it. Some try to explain it as owing to the lack of cottages in certain districts.

Cottages do not pay to build, and there may be a certain basis of fact in this argument; but it is not the kernel of the question, for even where the dwellings exist the men are wanting. Thus, I have had a cottage with a good garden standing vacant for a year because I cannot find a man to put into it. Indeed, I am told that in one small village a few miles away no less than forty cottages are unoccupied.

Mr. Philip Bagenal, the Local Government Board inspector for these counties, has very kindly sent me his 'Report on Pauperism and Distress for 1898,' in which he points out that the Census returns show that between the years 1871 and 1891 one-tenth of the agricultural labourers of Norfolk had left the land; adding: 'There is too much reason to believe that since 1891 the rate of decrease has been accelerated.' This rate, by the way, is slightly higher in Suffolk than in Norfolk.

Among the reasons given by Mr. Bagenal for this emigration are: the inability of farmers to employ as many labourers as formerly; the conversion of arable land into pasture; and the desire of the young men to lead a less monotonous life. The results he sums up in very few words: 'A constant drain of the best class of wage-earners is thus going on. The old and infirm are left, and these necessarily come on the rates.'

What is to be the end of it? Mr. Bagenal says in his report that we appear to have touched bottom in the matter of the conversion of arable into pasture. But if the exodus is to continue, I can see no other way of meeting it than by the multiplication of machines and the laying down of grass, which absorbs less labour than ploughland. Of course, however, this matter of the inconvenience ensuing to those employed in agricultural pursuits is but one side of the question, which involves other and even greater interests of a national character, and affecting the well-being of the whole race.

While waiting in Norwich for my train I took a walk to the cattle market. The sight of all those poor beasts crowded in their pens brought the memory of my ten departed Irish bullocks back to my mind with a force which was quite painful. Indeed, in one or two lots I could almost imagine that I saw the brutes there before me—gaunt, slab-sided, and hungry-eyed. I think that these unfortunate animals—especially those of them that are brought from over seas—must suffer more than most people imagine; at any rate, I am sure that I saw suffering written large on some of them to-day. But they cannot complain, and if they

try to resist the stout ash stick of the drover is waiting for them. Indeed, the brutality of these men, or some of them, especially when a little in liquor, is shocking. I saw them again and again striking the cattle in their charge without the slightest necessity, generally about the head, I suppose because experience teaches them that these animals are most sensitive to pain. Indeed, in one case a passer-by appealed to me to put a stop to the thing, but as there was no policeman in sight, what could I do? I suppose that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has local inspectors. Where were they? But at least it would be difficult to secure a conviction in such a case, as the offenders would swear that it was necessary to thrash the beasts in order to keep them in their places.

A week or two ago, through the kindness of a friend, I had the opportunity of tendering for, and very probably of obtaining, a large contract to supply hay, straw, roots, &c., to an institution in London to the value perhaps of about 1,000*l.* a year. The prices that the institution was willing to pay seemed to be quite satisfactory, the only question being whether or no the cost of carriage would absorb any profit which it would be possible to make. I have now made inquiries, to find that this is absolutely prohibitive. To deliver hay in London—that is at Liverpool Street, not reckoning the expense of cartage to its destination—involves a charge of 19*s.* 2*d.* a ton, whereas straw figures out at 1*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.*, though roots can be carried at 6*s.* 6*d.* if a truckful is sent. So there is an end of that scheme, which is a pity, since, if the carriage had been cheaper, many others besides myself would have benefited by it, as I should have bought up considerable quantities of produce in the neighbourhood. A gentleman to whom I was talking at the Norwich Club to-day told me that in his capacity of trustee or executor to some East Norfolk estate he had an opportunity of disposing of a great quantity of wind-felled timber, to be used for mining purposes in the North of England. The carriage which he was prepared to pay upon this timber amounted, I understand, to no less a sum than 6,000*l.*, but the railway companies concerned declined to transport it at that price, with the result that the business fell through, and the trees are now being disposed of locally for what they will fetch as fire-wood and fencing.

I may add that in my own case I also made inquiries as to delivery by water-carriage, but this too proved impracticable.

This question of transport is one of the gravest that the

agriculturist has to face, for here he must compete against the preferential rates granted to foreign produce by the railways. I will quote a single instance. The Rev. J. Valpy, of Elsing, in this county, writing to *The Times*, states that one of his parishioners gets a hundred apples delivered by rail from California, U.S., at a cost of 3s. But when the same person sent a hundred apples to be delivered in Leicester, by the Midland or Great Northern Railway, he was obliged to pay 2s. 10d.—that is to say, twopence less than the charge for the carriage of exactly the same quantity of fruit from California. This example speaks for itself. At the same time it would be unjust not to acknowledge with gratitude the efforts which are being made by the Great Eastern Railway to convey small parcels of farm and garden produce to London at greatly reduced rates.

December 7.—For the last few days we have been ploughing and fence trimming on the farm, in weather that, for the time of year, is extraordinarily fine and mild. It appears, indeed, according to a letter to *The Times* from Mr. G. J. Symons, that the nights of the 5th and 6th of this month were the warmest recorded in the notes of meteorological observations made during forty years. On the 6th the reading reached 63·9, which is nearly twenty degrees above the average for a December night. This temperature was warmer than that of any night during last May, while in July there were twenty-one days when the night temperatures were less. Wonderful are the ways of the British climate!

To-day the rain is falling in a steady sheet, which is unlucky, as Royal Duke and two other of my fat animals have gone to the Harleston auction, and beasts never look or handle so well if they are dragged with wet. My consolation is that all the other creatures on show will suffer from the same cause. Now is the time that we find the advantage of roofed-in yards. It is a pleasure to see the stock standing warm and dry beneath them, and the litter unwashed by a drop of water.

In such weather work is slack upon the farm, but one man is employed in whitewashing the cowsheds, another in cleaning harness, and so forth. To-day, for the first time since early spring, the ditch leading into the garden pond is running with water.

December 8.—The weather is now fine again, so that we are able to resume our ploughing. For the last three days I have been plunged in a controversy about that thorniest of all subjects—Free Trade. It began by my yielding to one of the most unwise of human impulses, and correcting a statement about myself in

a newspaper. Last Saturday, at the meeting of the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, of which I have spoken, in the course of my few remarks—according to the reporters—I said that agriculturists should urge upon Governments, or those responsible, the necessity of doing something to help the general state of agriculture, for in helping agriculture they would also help the general state of the labourer. Thereupon a leading local paper of advanced views devoted an article to me, in which it was stated that ‘by doing something’ I meant the introduction of protective measures. In actual fact I meant nothing of the sort. Protection was not in my mind; indeed, at the moment, speaking in a very cold room in a hurry, and entirely without premeditation, to a meeting that was eager to escape to lunch, I had not even formulated to myself what this ‘something’ ought to be, although generally I was alluding to the equalisation of rates on real and personal property and to the necessity of really effective measures for the protection of farmers against fraud.

Under these circumstances I corrected the local paper, which thereupon in another article replied that in 1895, when I was standing for Parliament, I urged the imposition of a tax upon imported flour and barley. This is true: in common with many other people I did urge the justice of such a tax, which, if looked into, however, will be found to mean a very infinitesimal measure of Protection. Barley is not used as a food for man, and I think that I was careful to exclude from my proposal crushed barley destined to be devoured by pigs. Further, when that grain was much dearer than at present, I believe that the price of beer was practically the same as it is to-day. Therefore the drop in the price of barley has not benefited the consumers of malt liquors, but has found its way into the pockets of brewers and middlemen. The duty on imported flour would only mean that the corn must come whole into this country, there to be ground by our millers. I have never urged, or wished to urge, that any duty should be charged upon wheat or upon sea-borne meat, as under present circumstances I am of opinion that this might be against the interests of the community as a whole.

One of the many dangers of a newspaper correspondence is its seductiveness. The controversialist, seeing things stated about himself to which he objects, is led on to reply and explain, whereby, in nine cases out of ten, he makes matters worse than they were before. I replied and I explained—amongst other things that, although I still held the same opinions as to the justice of an

import tax upon foreign barley and flour, the whole question had, in my view, become purely academical on account of the strong opposition of the people of this country, and that I did not think it likely that I should again urge the imposition of a duty upon any foreign foodstuffs. I added, however, that I did hold it desirable that under certain circumstances a bounty should be given to the growers of wheat. But here are my exact words:

'I do, however, think it desirable that whenever wheat falls below a certain unprofitable price—say 30s. a quarter—a moderate bounty should be paid from the Imperial Exchequer to those who continue to grow it. Probably it is futile to expect that such a measure will be adopted except under the stern compulsion of conditions which we cannot foresee, and perhaps this also may be held to savour of Protection. Still, it will be admitted that, in view of national and other contingencies, it is not to the interest of the country that wheat should go out of cultivation, or indeed that the present area under that crop should be further contracted. Nor is it to the interest of the country that the classes who were wont to be employed in its production at a profit, and who for generations have been the backbone of England, should, for the lack of a reasonable wage, which under present circumstances it is impossible to pay them, be driven from the land that bore them and herded together in the towns.'

This letter has produced a third article, wherein I am held up as one reprobate, and told that 'a noble scorn of consequence' is preferable by far to 'a spirit of stealthy opportunism.'

Well, I am a person acquainted with criticism; indeed, there are few epithets, angry or disparaging, that have not at one time or another landed upon my appointed head, but never before has it been suggested, as I understand this writer to suggest, that I am a stealthy opportunist. From no such failing as this, O Scribe, have I chiefly suffered in the past, but rather from a tendency to enter on crusades and to indulge in speech unduly plain. Surely, too, as a matter of argument, my position could better have been defined as stealthily opportunistic if, hiding my real views, for this reason or for that, I had pretended to change them. But I make no such pretence; I say only that it is useless to continue to urge publicly—by which I mean in the main with speeches addressed to country audiences—what the electorate rejects; and further, that the advocacy of any measure of Protection, however just it may seem to some, is so misinterpreted and exaggerated, that it is perhaps best to leave the matter alone.

For instance, during my election campaign in 1895 it was persistently put about in the constituency that I supported the imposition of a tax upon wheat and meat. This, as I have said, I have never even thought of doing.

My letter, I am further informed, 'is mainly interesting as an index to the true inwardness of the Conservative mind on subjects of economic policy.' I do not quite see what the purely private views of a purely private person who is not engaged in standing for Parliament have to do with either the outwardness or the inwardness of the Conservative Mind. Probably, if it were asked, the Conservative Mind would decline to be identified with my personal opinions, which are, to be frank, of a somewhat independent order.

But this is not all of it, for my suggestion as to the advantages of a bounty is next discussed. It is pointed out that a bounty 'designed to prevent the cost of home-produced wheat falling below 30s. a quarter is a tax on the consumer to the extent of the difference between 30s. and the price at which wheat can be produced by other peoples.'

Quite so, and what then? Nobody can say that 30s. a quarter is a high price to pay for wheat; indeed, in this country it cannot be grown to profit at that figure. If a thing cannot be grown at a profit, sooner or later it ceases to be grown at all, and the real issue is, whether or no it is desirable that wheat should be cultivated in England in the future.

I do not pretend to any certainty of view upon the subject—mine is only a pious opinion. It may be wise that we should learn to depend entirely upon foreign supplies of corn, though many declare that this would be the reverse of wisdom. But at least there are two sides to the question, and a time might come when, under the pressure of foreign complications, home-grown corn would be wanted. The issue therefore arises whether—if this supposition be correct—it is not better to violate the strict letter of a dogma than to expose the country to what may be a national danger? Lastly, to come to the root, out of which all this controversy grew—how about the labourers who live upon the land? Are they or are they not to receive a decent wage? At present their pay is inadequate, and therefore they are leaving the land, neither, as I believe, to their own ultimate benefit nor to the good of the country. Is this to go on or is it not to go on? And if it is not to go on, how is it to be prevented? That is the problem to

which wiser men than I must find an answer, and within the next generation.

What I have never been able to understand is why people who, owing, let us suppose, to some mental peculiarity, are unable to accept as wise or advisable all the strict and far-reaching consequences of the Cobden doctrines, should be spoken of almost as though they were evil-doers—why, indeed, others, possibly more enlightened, should wag the head and point the finger at them even as though they were persons who, conceiving, rightly or wrongly, that they had a message to deliver and a duty to perform, have dared to write a novel with a purpose? These doctrines in their entirety are to-day, scarcely without exception, repudiated, or at any rate not acted upon, by the other civilised peoples of the world, those of our own colonies included, most of whom are not without intelligence, and may indeed be supposed to be competent, like ourselves, to form an opinion as to what is or is not prudent and to their own advantage. Also they are questioned by a great many thinking men in this country, as is evidenced by the articles which now continually appear in some of the leading papers. And yet, if an individual ventures openly to express the belief that a tax upon imported barley and foreign-ground flour is just, or that it would be desirable to give a bounty to home-grown corn, behold what happens to him! Perhaps, however, the local paper does not really think that I am so very wicked, or wish to throw strange lights upon my views; indeed, I venture to believe that, if all the truth were known, we part good friends.

Hood tells me that the weather at Harleston yesterday was fearful, but, wet or fine, the show and sale had to be held. All my three beasts were disposed of. Royal Duke fetched 26*l.*, turning the scale at 93 st. 12 lb. live weight, which is estimated to produce about 63 stone dead weight. The young bullock and the heifer, aged about eighteen months, sold respectively for 17*l.* 5*s.* and 17*l.* Although he took first prize at the Lothingland Show, Royal Duke has never quite come up to expectations, as throughout his—for a bullock—considerable career of two years ten months he has proved himself but a second-class 'doer.' Ultimately he was bought by our local butcher for the same sum that the said butcher offered before he left my yard, and as his journey to Harleston and the sale expenses will come to at least 1*l.* 1*s.*, it is clear that we have lost money by our enterprise. Still, it is a good thing occasion-

ally to sell stock at a public auction, as it advertises the fact of the existence of a herd. For instance, the two young things went away to Colchester, and those who bought them may come back for more.

December 9.—The weather to-day remains mild and windy. On the farm there is little or nothing of interest to record. The ploughs move from place to place, and throughout the grey December days steal up and down the dripping fields. Beyond the daily routine of stock-feeding, root-cutting, &c., that is almost all. It is the dead of winter, in which few things grow; and yet I suppose that things do grow whenever the temperature is above 42 degrees, for the tender wheat shoots lengthen almost imperceptibly, and the young bean plants look sturdier at each visit, also the green leaves of weeds spring in the shelter of the hedges.

To-day a widow visited me to enlist my interest, such as it is, in the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, to which admirable charity I am a small subscriber, and asked me to sign her certificate of recommendation. For thirty-four years her husband farmed no less than 680 acres of land in this neighbourhood, for which he paid an annual rent of 930*l*. Now she is penniless. The causes to which her present distress are attributed, as they appear upon the paper, are 'loss of capital, bad seasons, &c.' As in all such cases, and their name is legion in the Eastern Counties, that '&c.' covers a great deal. It includes, for instance, the practical ruin of the agricultural interest. Is it a permanent ruin, I wonder, or will it pass like other sorrows?

To-day, too, I visited a man who has now been bedridden for about five years. He is a soldier who served in Egypt and took part in some of the desert battles—a broken Arab spearhead is one of the ornaments of the tidy room where he lies from year to year, with no sight but the topmost boughs of an apple-tree to cheer him. In spring he sees that tree grow green with leaf and pink with blossom, in summer and autumn the fruit swell and ripen before him, then comes winter and the boughs are bare again. That is all he finds to look at, all that remains to tell him of the passing of the seasons.

This man was born at Bedingham and knows the Moat Farm well. Oddly enough, I found his wife and himself reading this diary in the magazine in which it is being published, and he talked to me with interest of the condition of the Moat Farm as he remembered it—he who, as I suppose, will never see the face

of earth again, although his life may be prolonged for years. He suffered from fever in Egypt, and a while after he left the Service paralysis seized his legs, affecting all one side of him including his left eyelid. At first it was thought that he would die, but he did not die, on the contrary he has grown somewhat stronger. What strikes me most about him is the gentle patience with which he bears his terrible affliction. I congratulated him upon the improvement in his health since my last visit, to which he replied that this did not lessen the burden 'of those who had to bear with him.' Many of us who worry and repine at our ailments and troubles might surely learn a lesson from this quiet sufferer. But I think that patience and a kind of divine courage often characterise those who are thus smitten. Some years ago I was interested in a paralytic of the name of Flintoff, who passed the last years of his life in the Ditchingham Hospital, and whose story was curious enough, although I have not space to tell it. One day a message was sent to me to say that he was dying, and I hurried to the place to bid him farewell. He received me with a beaming smile.

'Thank God, dear friend,' he gasped in a broken whisper so low that I could scarcely catch his words, 'at last I am "shuffling off—this mortal coil."'

He was a man of considerable reading and enjoyed quoting Shakespeare to the end.

With reference to the controversy of which I wrote yesterday, I am interested to see in the paper where it has been carried on a letter from a gentleman who signs himself 'An Old Radical.' The Old Radical, after stating that he is strongly opposed to myself in politics, adds that 'in this instance, if he will allow so unworthy a subject to join hands with him, I will.' He then says that he has passed the allotted span of life, that he was born a farmer's son, and became a London tradesman, and has been the witness of a great deal of misery, with the result that 'the very thought of Protection makes me shudder.' He adds that after forty-five years of absence he returned to his native county. Now I will let him speak for himself:

'What did I find? Well, I looked about for my old schoolboy friends, sons of men of good position in those days. I found most of them dead, and, if not dead, certainly "dead-broke." Several of them are paupers. I seek for the cause. I find it all put down to Free Trade. I say that we cannot afford to have our wheat lands thrown out of cultivation. Then don't kill the farmer,

but give him a bounty. Let the loaf be cheap, and if the foreigner wants to swamp us with his corn, let him. Let's have a cheap loaf, and no reasonable taxpayer will object to help the farmer.'

A bounty on wheat when it falls below 30s. a quarter may be an economical iniquity—possibly it is—but at least, even if it be slightly illogical, a letter like this, coming from such a source, is a curious sign of the times.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

(To be concluded.)

An Elk-Chasse.

I HAD stood, many a summer morning, when the gossamer made a Fairyland of the damp, sun-kissed moor, and gazed in a kind of delighted awe upon certain circular trampled spots, each some three yards or more in diameter, which the keeper informed me were the sleeping quarters of the elk, and must have been vacated by their occupiers but a few minutes ago—probably at the moment when our tramping and calling to the dogs first became audible to their acute ears. I had walked, too, along a beaten track in the forest which the same keeper solemnly informed me was the high road of the elk tribe, or at any rate one of the high roads used by the glorious creatures in their journeys between Russian and Finnish feeding-grounds, and I had smiled at this the smile of the scornful.

‘Why should they travel from Russia to Finland?’ I had replied. ‘What is Russia to them, and what is Finland? They cannot discern the frontier, my excellent Simeon? There is no receipt of custom for them; their luggage is not examined, and they carry no passports. The whole world is theirs to wander where they will. They are not slaves, bound by vexatious laws, like you and me, Simeon; they know not one country or one people from another.’

‘Do they not?’ said Simeon, with an accent of scorn which certainly equalled my own. ‘You are wrong, Barin. The elk know Russia from Finland very well—better than we, who are only aware that we cross a frontier because, as you say, we are asked for our passports and our goods are overhauled. Moreover, they know it for an excellent reason, which is this: that in Finland elk are safe from the beginning of the year to the end of it. It is unlawful to shoot them at any time. Therefore, when they are alarmed they retire to Finland, and go by these roads. Moreover, again, there are close times for them also in Russia, and at

such times you will find more elk in this country than during those months when they may be shot. Oh, believe it, Barin, old *Los* knows as much as a man, and perhaps a little more. The king of the forest is not the fool you think him, though he is harmless and benevolent, and will not attack the king of the villages, which is man.'

I was not prepared to accept all this on Simeon's unsupported testimony; but I have since been informed that it is true, or that his statement contains, at any rate, a considerable proportion of truth. The elk have learned where they are safe and where they are occasionally shot at; and they undoubtedly follow certain beaten tracks in journeying from Russia to the Tsar's Grand Duchy of Finland, or *vice versa*.

I have often dreamed, too, both sleeping and waking, of these elk roads, and of how supremely glorious it would be to lie in wait one day and watch a magnificent elk family approach and pass by; the splendid old king leading, wearing his crown of wide, seven-pointed antlers; his noble old head held proudly up and out; his fine eyes clear and full open, and his ears cocked as he swung along, followed—it may be—by his queen only, with her half-grown princeling, or perhaps by a more numerous suite of relatives of the blood royal. I have dreamed often, I say, of such a *rencontre* as this, but in my dreams I have never been a regicide, or even harboured the thought of compassing the death or hurt of one of these glorious ones. They gaze upon me as they pass my ambush, fixing wide, benign eyes upon my face; and they toss their great heads slowly up and down as they gaze, satisfied that I am not to be feared as a murderer of their kind, and as though expressing their satisfaction in a series of courtly bows.

How I should love to follow them in some astral, invisible, and therefore undisconcerting, form; to spend several days in moving hither and thither in the company of this royal family, and to watch their daily doings. He is kind, and good, and noble in his domestic relations, this old king, I am sure of it. The comely creature, his consort, loves and trusts him, and the little fellow trotting between them admires him immeasurably, and already tries to imitate his stately ways.

What if they meet another branch of the family royal somewhere in the mysterious depths of the forest? Do they gravely salute one another and pass on in stately, dignified silence? Do they cut one another dead, making as though they remained in

ignorance of the existence of rival claimants to the kingship of the forest?

And what if hungry wolves should attack or pursue them? The brutes would require to be hungry indeed before they would dare have recourse to so sacrilegious and withal so suicidal an action. Would his haughty majesty run from them? Would he, first allowing his family to pass in front of him, take the place of greater danger and put his grand limbs in motion for the fear of so base a thing as a wolf, or two wolves? I do not think so. I prefer to picture him to myself defending his family with defiant, death-dealing heels presented to the foe; or should one of the rascally miscreants have had the audacity to leap upon the shoulder or the flank of the prince his son, as spurning him thence with paw or antler, and as he lies squealing or howling upon the ground, sending his wolfish spirit a-flitting and his audacious brains a-flying with a back hack from the hind leg.

I think old Bruin and he do not meet, or meet but seldom. Each would consider, I fancy, that discretion in such matters is the better part of valour. Old Bruin is a cautious person, and handsomely gifted with this same quality of discretion. He would see the royal procession from afar, and he would withdraw himself, quietly, from their line of march; for he would have nothing to gain by quarrelling with these people, and he feels—discreet and cautious as he is—that he is never quite master of his temper, and that he might be led by it into indiscretions which would bring down upon his head unknown sorrows and pains at the heels of this big, antlered fellow.

And the king himself—bless him!—desires no quarrel with anyone. He prefers to live his life in dignified repose. If attacked, he must, of course, defend himself and those who look to him for protection; but he would rather reign in undisputed supremacy; and though not afraid of Bruin, he knows that it were better that each should keep out of the way of the other.

Yet, oh, how I should like to witness a meeting between them! To see them suddenly and unexpectedly encounter one another in some dense and tangled corner in mid-forest! Old Bruin would first moan, and then utter a growling roar—I know his ways—and then moan and mutter again. His evil temper would be jogging at his elbow and whispering, ‘Go for him—go for him—curse him! What’s he doing in your private preserves? Go for him and drag him down into the mud!’ And his discretion would speak in the moanings and mutterings which follow

the angry roar, and say, 'Oh, I should like to, but look at his size! I hate him, but I shall have to leave him alone!'

And all the while our grand and gracious king stalks by, crashing through fallen tree and standing sapling, slowly bowing his great head in solemn courtesy, his stateliness quite undisturbed by the rudeness of the other fellow.

And so their paths cross and they are gone. Whither? Heaven only knows. They will never, in all probability, see one another again; and neither will regret it much; but, oh for an astral body in which to follow one and the other, and see for myself what each does with his life! How old Bruin spends the surly, discontented hours that go to make up his ill-tempered, complaining existence. For Bruin is like a naughty child—only tolerable when he is asleep. While plunged in his winter-long coma he is a charming fellow; but once awake and about again, nothing is good enough for him, he is never pleased, never satisfied; he will be for ever moaning and complaining, and flying, with no reasonable excuse, into ridiculous and totally unnecessary fits of rage, to the great loss of his personal dignity.

What a difference between him and our regally calm and dignified King Elk! I think my astral ego would soon weary of following old Bruin about. His manners would quickly disgust me, and his evil temper would offend the refined imagination of an astral companion, and I should soon flit away once more in search of his betters.

However, Nature has not dowered me with an astral body, and I cannot, except in dreamland, indulge myself in the great desire I often feel to follow birds and animals unseen, and watch them in their private lives. Until we can do so, or until—like a certain eminent naturalist—we can teach ourselves the language of the apes or of the birds, and speak to them and persuade them that we are not always thirsting for their blood, but desire to make friends of them and to understand and be loved by them, we must be content to remain in ignorance of much of their private, inner existence.

We have a bowing acquaintance with a few of them, but they rarely show us more than a superficial friendliness, because they know well that we are not to be trusted, being a fire-spitting, murderous race of creatures, fond of shedding blood, and averse to allowing others to enjoy their share in the general scheme of existence.

I had seen elk—in the distance—indistinctly. I had caught

a glimpse of just such a family as has been described above, and at the sight my breath had stopped with a jerk and my heart ceased to beat. Was it possible that I really and truly gazed—I, with my unworthy eyes—upon this spectacle, so long desired?

‘Oh, yes, they are elk all right!’ Gatesby had replied to my ejaculation; ‘and, what’s more, we’ll get the keepers to ring them, if it is to be done. Don’t let the beggars see you, for they’re a timid crew, and they won’t wait about to be ringed if they catch sight of a man.’

There you are. There was the whole thing in a nutshell. The matter-of-fact, worldly view of the thing. They were elk all right, and the keepers must ring them for us in order that we might shoot them. And shoot them I should, of course, if I had the chance. And the elk knew it, and would not wait about to be ringed ‘if they saw a man.’ Gatesby was perfectly right, and so were the elk.

No wonder the wild animals will have nothing to say to us, for indeed we make no bid for their confidence and affection. In our philanthropical moments some of us are mercifully inclined towards them in a theoretical way, and realise that there is even more pleasure in studying than in killing them; but put a gun into your theorist’s hand and drive the frightened creatures—be they furred or feathered—towards him, and lo! he who in theory and in cold blood has lately posed as their best friend is among the readiest to put a bullet or an ounce of shot into them.

The keepers ringed those elk, and ringed them very cleverly, in the evening, making a wide circle so that the poor creatures might have space for feeding when morning came without breaking the ring. They were to eat their last meal before the execution, like condemned criminals. All unsuspecting (unless some beater should give the show away by making a noise), they would rise from their snow beds—a great circle of brown earth looming dark and damp a foot or so below the surrounding unmelted snow—and begin to breakfast drowsily upon the nearest available pine shoots, shaking the snow from the branch before stripping it, with the aid of that prehensile upper lip of theirs, of its green needles.

And then suddenly would fall upon their shocked senses the sound of Bedlam broken loose, the din of the infernal regions, and they would half realise, in their poor, fear-benumbed brains, that the arch-enemy man was about; and hither and thither their bewildered steps would helplessly turn, seeking safety, and finding

only terror and din and the peril of death. In a word, our beat would begin. Excitement and the delight of the sportsman for Gatesby and me, at the expense of awful terror and misery, and perhaps red death itself, for them.

'Bravo! Simeon, and bravo you too, Spiridon!' cried Gatesby, learning the great news of this elk ring as we sat and finished our dinner. 'Drink this to the goodness of their night's rest! See that the beaters don't disturb their slumbers in the morning.'

Simeon and Spiridon swallowed their doses of whisky, each with a smack of his lips and an 'Ah!' of satisfaction, following the ejaculation with a sweep of the back of the hand over the mouth and a '*Späsëbo*,' a Finnish word implying gratitude, which, being Russians, they had no right to use, but which they did largely employ nevertheless, on every occasion, because Korkino, where Gatesby and I were down a-hunting, is near the Finnish boundary, and the Russians there, in manners and appearance, and also in language, are half Finns.

'The beaters will be all right,' grunted Spiridon; 'it is not their first experience. Each one that sneezes or coughs, or makes any noise in moving over the snow, will be fined one glass of vodka; and the fear of this will keep each man still as death.'

I know not what was the exact hour at which I was awakened from my dreams; it was an hour which I very rarely meet face to face—four, or five, or something absurd of that kind. This is a period of the morning which I have often heard described, of course, as a familiar hour to intense people, German emperors, and so on, who have generally done half a day's work before it arrives; but personally I know little of it, and never hear the clock mention its arrival.

Simeon awoke me, and I did not love him any the better for it, for the morning was dark and cold, and my dreams had been sweet and innocent. I had dreamt of elk—a whole colony of them—with whom I had made friends, having undertaken (before admission to the privilege of their confidence) to break every gun and rifle I possessed, and never to shoot at another creature, whether four-footed or biped, feathered or furred. I remember that the elk and I had learned to love one another very much. They taught me to eat pine needles, and I taught them many civilised arts. But I am always that kind of person in dreamland, and as ready a blood-spiller as any when dreams give place to reality.

Simeon was in a hurry. He must be off to place his beaters,

he said. Fifty of them, or more, were already waiting and shivering, ready to be led to their places. When we had taken our coffee we were to come along in sledges. The driver would know where to drop us; and for all sakes, Simeon ended, 'make no more sound as you walk to your places than a fish makes as he swims in the sea, for, though the elk will sleep until daylight, they sleep with ears wide open, and elk—though large—are timid folk.'

So deeply impressed were we by Simeon's warning that I remember distinctly whispering to Gatesby as we sat at breakfast a request to pass the butter; and that Gatesby laughed rudely and said, 'Hang it, man, the elk are not in the back yard!'

Then we drove several miles through the darkness and the penetrating chill of a January morning in Russia before the sun is up. We drove until our driver stopped the horses, and with finger to lip pointed with his left hand.

There stood Spiridon.

'Put on your snow-shoes,' whispered that sportsman, 'and—these.'

'These' were two nondescript garments of white calico, something like surplices, but with arms. They were, it seemed, to be drawn on over our furred shooting coats in order to make us less visible when standing in the snow. The curious things reached to the knees, and the appearance of Gatesby in his very nearly caused me to give away the show, for he really looked very funny; but I knew that a laugh at this moment would be reckoned unto me an unpardonable sin, and I swallowed my desire, like the hero one must on occasion prove oneself.

Then came a silent procession for a long mile or so, Spiridon leading. It was still dusk, but the sky showed signs of relaxing its gloomy frown. Presently Spiridon stopped.

'One of you just here,' his lips said, though I heard no sound.

Gatesby signed to me to remain. He and Spiridon glided on, and I saw the keeper place him a moment later some hundred yards or so to my left.

Then came the waiting and the dreaming, and the heart-beating which is superinduced at such agitating moments by every slightest sound that comes from the forest. I distinctly heard a human cough at a long distance, and to myself I said, 'There goes a glass of vodka from someone's account!'

Now and then a lump of snow fell with a thud from some

overladen branch, frightening me out of my wits. Once I heard as distinctly as possible, and apparently from close at hand, the sudden, weird, startling howl of a wolf.

As to my thoughts, they were not worthy to be recorded. They vacillated. At one moment I found myself reflecting upon the meanness of the enterprise in which I was now engaged. To lie in ambush, heavily armed, specially clothed to be invisible, arrayed in every way that experience and crafty science could teach me, against—what? A harmless old elk and his wife and child, whose flesh was uneatable (or at any rate nasty); whose skin was not worth preserving; whose antlered head would certainly form an imposing memorial of one's prowess, if, indeed, it did not rather recall the memory of something one was half-ashamed of!

Then other thoughts would drive these away. Why should not man go out and amuse himself after this manly fashion? Elk must die one day. Better to die handsomely at the rifle's mouth and his head to be set up—a lasting memory of his magnificence—than perish miserably of old age and starvation, or a prey to cowardly wolves, who would wait until advancing years had rotted those splendid antlers and stiffened the powerful legs, and would then fall upon his decaying majesty and eat him up.

Day came gradually, bringing the stronger light upon its wing. The forest began to awaken. Beautiful little birds appeared: waxwings (among the comeliest of God's feathered children), grossbeaks, fieldfares. They flew about around me and chirped and chattered. Nothing had as yet occurred to alarm them.

A tawny red fox stole guiltily across in front of my cover, eyeing the birds as he went; but he had other ideas, it appeared, as to breakfast, and did not attempt to interfere with them, but trotted on.

A pair of tree partridges came flying from heaven knows where and settled high up in a pine over my head; I watched them alternately feeding and preening, and feeding again. One picked a feather from beneath his wing and set it floating in the air; it fell at my feet; I have it still. Then, as I raised my eyes from picking it up, I became aware of a New Thing.

The great crucial moments of one's life sometimes come suddenly and unexpectedly, so much so that the heart within one's bosom can scarcely cope with the sudden magnitude of the event, whatever it may be, and refuses, for a second or two, to continue its

necessary function. I stood and gasped for breath and gazed, all eyes.

There they were—all three of them, as God made them; free of alarm, natural, dignified and deliberate, living their ordinary life, utterly unsuspecting of evil and ambush, of fire and bullets, of death gaping ready for them. His majesty led the way, feeding quietly as he leisurely ploughed the deep snow. I saw him turn his great head as though to see that his family followed in his tracks, and I saw the gentle creature, his consort, stop to caress the little one, rubbing the lower part of her chin along his back and repeating the action several times.

In a moment they passed out of sight; but I had seen them.

Whatever ill fortune might befall me in the future I must still remember that to the credit of destiny!

I was still rejoicing in spirit over the delight of the spectacle vouchsafed to me, albeit a hundred and fifty yards away, when of a sudden a noise on the far left startled me. There was a shout and the clang of some tin implement against a tree. Had the beat begun? If so, the beaters had begun it of necessity and without the preordained signal from Simeon, which is generally the simple but effective one of a stentorian invitation to all to 'Yell up and drive the——' well, we will say the quarry, into a warm corner, though Simeon's words are more forcible. Probably the poor, unsuspecting creatures, my friends of a few minutes ago, had attempted to break the ring, and had been turned back by a watchful beater.

Immediately Simeon's voice was upraised. I heard him bid the waiting crowd shout, all, and drive the rascally brutes (I am translating mildly) back into the ring; and then—as with one accord—some threescore pairs of lungs simultaneously gave forth discordant sounds; these, with rattles, drums, tin cans, pipes, and bells burst into a general, devilish din, and pandemonium was let loose in the forest. Away flew my fieldfares scolding and chiding; the sturdy grossbeaks departed with a single note of alarm; the foolish, or fearless, waxwings remained, however, and attended to the business of the morning, taking no notice of the noise.

Two white hares pursued one another, wild with anxiety, across my line of vision, followed by a fox, who thought of the terror behind him and took no heed of the fleeting white things that spurned the ground in advance of him, though in happier moments their presence would have been of great interest. Presently the hares came scudding back again, too terrified to know where they

ran or to make any settled plan of escape from the terror ; but the fox did not return ; his cunning had not failed him, and he had kept his head in a time of adversity.

Then the wildest desire suddenly possessed my soul to see the elk come bearing down towards me, and to shoot and to destroy.

In several places the beaters yelled frantically, drowning—in their sudden crescendo and fortissimo—the level din of the surrounding noise-producers. It is these sudden frenzied accesses of excited noise that rouse one, in a beat for big game, to uncontrollable enthusiasm for a sight of the quarry ; because they prove that the creature, whatever it may be, bear or elk or wolf, is in the ring and trying to get out of it, and that the beaters have caught sight of the animal and are doing their utmost to defeat its purpose.

Will they do it ? Will they stand up to the big creature, and by frantic noise and threatening gestures turn it back into the circle of danger and death ?

Elk being harmless, lofty-souled creatures, without a desire in their great hearts to injure even an enemy, will generally return ; they are easily driven back ; the wave of a kerchief by an old woman will cause them to stop and turn. It is different with a bear. Attempt to interfere with the purpose he has formed and, if he has kept his temper up to that moment, he will keep it no longer, but will 'go for' the offending beater, and if there is no tree handy to be hastily shinned up by the pursued one, that beater will undergo an experience which is said to be very unpleasant by those who have tried it and have lived to tell the tale.

A wolf, again, will slink back at the first noise or menace. He will listen and weigh the chances for and against a bolt, and peer out from the cover, fox-like, in every direction, trying to discern upon which side lies safety ; he will not do much scudding backwards and forwards until he has lost his hope and has determined that, though he would rather hide, he must now run for his life, and this he will not do until terror has unnerved him and unshipped the steering gear of his natural cunning.

As for me, I crouched and clutched my rifle, and prayed at every gust of augmented noise that the trusty beaters might turn the elk. Where were they now ?—in the ring or out and away, pounding along through the deep snow as only elk can do, towards life and safety, their backs turned upon death, or standing somewhere, in piteous, helpless incomprehension, dazed by the din ; menaced and terrified, in this direction and in that, by

yelling, gesticulating beaters—fearing, perhaps feeling a presentiment of a worse thing?

Then suddenly Gatesby fired.

A pandemonium of yells from every side instantly greeted the shot, congratulatory yells, I suppose, from the delighted beaters, who thus learned that their efforts had not been in vain,—and then he fired a second shot.

Almost at the same moment I saw a vision—a totally unexpected vision.

Two great grey things crept cautiously and quickly past me from left to right, making rather into the ring than out of it—wolves. I raised my gun, in the agitation of the moment, and fired. A moment later I felt convinced that I had acted foolishly; my shot would turn the elk from me and lose me the chance of the superior quarry!—moreover, it seemed that I had missed the wolf, for I could see nothing of it.

Gatesby was shouting for Simeon to come quickly. What was the matter? Another instant and Gatesby himself appeared, gliding quickly towards me on snow-shoes.

‘The elk are out!’ he shouted. ‘The old bull badly wounded but going fairly strong. We shall have to follow. Where’s Simeon? What did you fire at?’

I explained.

‘Come,’ said Gatesby, ‘we’ve time to see whether you hit him before Simeon reaches us. Where was he? Here are his tracks. Ha! see there. You touched up the rascal; we may yet——’

At this instant frantic yells from the beaters, now close in, suddenly drowned Gatesby’s words.

There was blood on the track. Gatesby smiled and spoke louder: ‘I fancy the beaters have him!’ he said. ‘How unpopular wolves are! listen to the language!’

I did so. Twenty or more lusty throats were engaged in yelling out, at full voice, the vilest abusive words in the Russian vocabulary, which is peculiarly rich in vituperative expressions.

A few moments later yells, as of triumph, followed, and presently a shouting mob hove in view dragging or carrying the dead wolf. One of the men had brained him with a huge knotted stick as he crawled, mortally wounded, out of the ring to die.

Almost immediately Simeon dashed up to us.

‘Tfu!’ he exclaimed, glancing scornfully at the wolf, and spitting. Is that all? What of the elk, Barin? You must have seen them.’

'The bull is hard hit,' said Gatesby, 'and must be followed. We only wait for you. Come.'

Back to Gatesby's late ambush we hastened. Spiridon appeared from somewhere and joined us. Simeon examined the tracks, disfigured by large red patches of royal elk-blood.

'Ah!' he ejaculated. 'Good! He did not fall, I see, but he stumbled. He is hard hit, but he will travel many miles. Will you return home and leave the pursuit to Spiridon and me? It may be a long one.'

Simeon addressed Gatesby, who referred the question to me.

'Shall we help run him down?' he said. 'I don't see why our wind shouldn't be as good as Simeon's.'

I had not had so much practice upon the shoes as any of my three companions, but I hurriedly cast my vote for pursuit. I would run at any rate until I dropped or melted away.

'Oh, we'll go, of course!' I said.

In a moment snow-shoe straps were tightened, guns taken in hand, and away we raced in pursuit. There was a considerable quantity of blood here and there—so much so that Simeon assured us there could be no doubt that we should ultimately come up with the wounded monarch—'if not to-day, then to-morrow.'

To-morrow, quotha? Gatesby and I interchanged grim looks, which, being interpreted, signified: What about dinner? What about our little white beds? What about our weary, weary legs, after many hours of fatiguing snow-shoe running? A few miles of it would suffice, I felt, in so far as I was concerned. As the least proficient of the party, I regret to be obliged to confess that I delayed the procession more than once by coming to terrible grief in shooting a hill, involving in my fall poor Gatesby, who was coming along just behind me. Like twin meteors we flew through space together, and together lay buried awhile in deep snow—a writhing, kicking, mingled mass of limbs and snow-shoes. The keepers eventually sorted us, however, as well as circumstances would permit, and we re-formed the procession and resumed the pursuit. I need not describe that long run; suffice to say that by the time the sun had nearly completed his short diurnal round we were all reduced to a consistency resembling pulp, and went puffing along in a lamentable condition of breathlessness.

But still we persevered, for the chase, we agreed, must be brought to an end before darkness set in, and there were indica-

tions that the elk could not now be very far ahead. The stricken monarch was tiring; he had stopped to rest several times, his faithful consort and princeling remaining with him, and once he had lain down. A little farther and we could distinguish the crashing of branches as the animals tore their way through the cover in front of us. The sound encouraged us to make a supreme effort, and we spurted like mad things. We had long since cast off most of our clothing, leaving each garment where it had been stripped off and thrown aside.

Suddenly Simeon stopped. He placed his finger to his lips in token of silence. We all listened.

'There is no more crashing of branches in front of us,' said Simeon. 'He is down.'

A short spurt of a couple of hundred yards brought us in view of a glorious and withal a pathetic spectacle. There lay the grand old monarch, prone beneath a pine; and there, too, was his faithful consort, standing over him and licking his heaving side and his shoulder flecked with foam and blood. Upon seeing us the gentle queen made off, evidently expecting that her lord would do the same. Twice she stopped and looked back, as though wondering why he did not come; then at last her natural fears prevailed, and she finally took her departure, setting out through the trees at a long, majestic trot, and was soon lost in the gathering dusk. As for the poor wounded monarch, he tried his best to struggle once more to his feet; but a merciful bullet ended his sufferings and sent his regal spirit a-wandering, whither I know not.

Requiescat in pace! His glorious head at least remains, antler-crowned, to remind me of his majesty and of his beauty in life. Gatesby had it stuffed whole and made me a present of it. The eyes look down upon me as I sit and write. They seem to gaze into my own with sorrowful reproach—I often think. Sometimes, in the small hours of night, when my spirit stands on the verge of dreamland, I have caught myself gazing in remorse upon my splendid trophy, and as his soft, wide eyes meet my own, I speak, in spirit, to his murdered majesty, and say: 'Oh, my lord, distress me not with reproachful looks; I have repented long since. Moreover, it was Gatesby did it, not I!'

FRED. WHISHAW.

The Use of Simples.

IN the language of the old herbalists, a 'simple' was the general term for any herb or plant which was supposed to possess medicinal properties. According to the curious belief of the time, every plant in the *Materia medica* was held to contain its own particular virtue, and therefore to constitute a 'simple' remedy. Hence herbs were simples; and in the botanical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an expedition in search of plants was frequently termed a 'simpling-voyage' or a 'simpling-journey,' while an apothecary skilled in the knowledge of herbs is designated by old Gerarde 'a learned and diligent searcher of simples.'

The term has now become obsolete, but it may serve to remind us of a curious branch of learning which was once identified with the practice of medicine. In ancient times 'whatever was scientific in the art of medicine was centred in the study of herbs, and the materials of the healing art were wholly vegetable.' The mineral and chemical remedies are of comparatively modern introduction, and date mainly from the Arabic physicians of the Middle Ages. This priority of herbal medicines, as Professor Earle has pointed out, has left its trace in the vocabulary of our language. The term *drug*, he tells us, 'is from the Anglo-Saxon *drigian*, to dry; and drugs were at first dried herbs. Thus the study of plants was identified with medicine by inveterate tradition; and when, in the sixteenth century, with the beginnings of modern botany, the chief cities of Europe established gardens for study, they were called Physic Gardens.'

The first of these public physic gardens appears to have been founded at Padua in the year 1533; this was quickly followed by similar institutions at Zurich, at Bologna, and at Cologne. In England, Dr. William Turner, 'the Father of British botany,' had a physic garden at his Deanery at Wells, and another at Kew, while he also seems to have had the direction of the Duke of

Somerset's garden at Sion House. Dear old Gerarde, whose quaint and curious *Herbal* is the delight alike of the botanist and of the lover of English literature, had a fine physic garden at Holborn, where he cultivated 'near eleven hundred sorts of plants of foreign and domestic growth.' Physic gardens were also established at Oxford and Edinburgh; and in the year 1673, owing in a great measure to the influence and liberality of Sir Hans Sloane, the friend of Ray, the famous garden at Chelsea was founded by the Company of Apothecaries.

These physic gardens were of great utility in promoting the sound study of botany and of medicine throughout Europe. But as the knowledge of science increased, the gulf between the vocation of the physician and of the herbalist grew wider. 'It was a severance,' says Professor Earle, in his interesting introduction to *English Plant Names*, 'of the popular from the scientific; and it went on widening as botany grew stronger and more conscious of its vocation, while the herbal sank ever lower in cant and charlatanry. These qualities early manifested themselves in connection with herbals. Even in old Gerarde, favourite and almost classic as he is, there is a spice of the mountebank. It is not that his book is tinged with popular error—all the books of the time are that—but his book leans to the side of superstition. Its motto might be the lines of Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*:

O who can tell

The hidden powre of herbes and might of Magick spell?

Ignored by the faculty, the herbal became the guide of the quack; and in Culpeper's famous *Herbal* it had become a fit companion for the *Astrological Almanac*.'

As an illustration of the ignorance and superstition associated with the use of simples, the belief in the Doctrine of Signatures may be taken. This belief is quaintly expressed by the old herbalist, William Coles, in his scarce work on the *Art of Simpling*, published in 1656: 'Though Sin and Sathan have plunged mankinde into an Ocean of Infirmities, yet the mercy of God which is over all his workes, maketh Grasse to grow upon the Mountaines, and Herbes for the use of Men, and hath not only stamped upon them a distinct forme, but also given them particular Signatures, whereby a man may read, even in legible characters, the use of them.'

Thus, to take two or three examples, the spotted leaves of the

Jerusalem cowslip, a plant common in cottage gardens, and known in the New Forest as 'Joseph and Mary,' indicate its value in cases of tuberculous lungs, and its former use for this purpose has given it the name of lungwort. In like manner the knotty tubers of the *Scrophularia*, or figwort, frequently found by the side of streams, are the sign or signature that the plant is a sovereign remedy for scrofulous or knotty glands; and the hard seeds or stony nutlets of the *Lithospermum*, or gromwell, proclaim it to be efficacious in cases of calculus or gravel. The scaly pappus of the common scabious, again, is the indication stamped upon it by God that the plant is valuable for leprous diseases; and the red hue of the stem and leaves of herb Robert (*Geranium Robertianum*, L.), so abundant in our hedgerows, is a certain sign that the plant is powerful as a 'stancher of blood.' In many of our Hampshire woods the elegant plant known as Solomon's seal is found. If the rootstock be cut transversely across some marks like unto a seal will be noticed. This was sufficient to show the old herbalists that the plant was specially created for the express purpose of 'sealing' or healing wounds. 'The root of Solomon's seal,' says Gerarde, 'taketh away in one night, or two at the most, any bruise, black or blue spots, gotten by falls, or women's wilfulness in stumbling upon their hasty husbands' fists.'

In spite, however, of the quackery which was inseparably bound up with the profession of the herbalist, there can be no doubt that a belief in the virtue of simples was very general among all classes in the olden times. There is a curious passage in George Herbert's *Country Parson*, in which the saintly poet of Bemerton insists on a 'knowledge of simples' as part of the necessary equipment of a parish priest. The parson, except in 'ticklish cases,' is to be the physician of his flock. He is to keep by him 'one book of physic, one anatomy, and one herbal.' He is to make the vicarage garden his shop, 'for home-bred medicines are both more easy for the parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies. So, when the apothecary useth either for loosing, rhubarb, or for binding, bolearmena, the parson,' says Herbert, 'useth damask or white roses for the one, and plaintain, shepherd's purse, knotgrass for the other, and that with better success.' So for salves, the parson's wife—for the wife, says Herbert, is to be chosen, not for her 'qualities of the world,' but for her 'skill in healing a wound'—'seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish

gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, meliot, and St. John's-wort, made into a salve, and elder, camomile, mallows, comphrey, and smallage, made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures. And in curing of any the parson and his family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop to the church.'

And doubtless there was a certain virtue in many of these old-world remedies. The use of them would hardly have been continued had their efficacy been found altogether wanting. And certain it is that many of these herbal preparations were regarded with favour even by scientific men. John Ray was the greatest naturalist of his age, and may be fairly said in his *Methodus Plantarum* to have laid the foundation of modern scientific botany, yet he not only believed in the virtue of plants, but even used herbal remedies for his own ailments. Towards the end of his life Ray suffered severely from some scrofulous complaint, and was greatly troubled with ulcers on the legs. For this we find him using a 'decoction of elecampane, dockroot, and chalk, in whey, and bathing the affected parts therewith'; while, instead of physic, he is taking a 'plain diet drink, made of dock-root, watercress, brooklime, plaintain, and alder leaves, boiled in wort.' For a time, he tells Sir Hans Sloane, he received some benefit from this treatment, till 'the winter coming on, and little virtue in the herbs,' he was forced to give it over.

In Gilbert White's *History of Selborne* we learn, unfortunately, very little about the use of simples. He recommends, indeed, that the botanist should direct his attention to the examination of 'the powers and virtues of efficacious herbs,' and should endeavour to 'promote their cultivation'; but he has little to tell us about the actual use of them. The only instance he gives is with reference to *Helleborus fetidus*, the stinking hellebore, or setterwort, which grew 'all over the High Wood and Coney Croft Hanger.' 'The good women of Selborne,' he tells us, 'give the leaves of this plant powdered to children troubled with worms; but it is a violent remedy, and ought to be administered with caution.' This plant, which is rare in England, was highly valued by those skilled in the use of simples. Its name, 'setterwort,' reveals a curious use once made of it. 'Husbandmen,' writes old Gerarde, 'are wont to make a hole, and put a piece of the root into the dewlap of their cattle, as a *seton*, in cases of diseased lungs; and this is called pegging or *setting*.' This use of helle-

bore was common in the days of Gilbert White, and even in the early part of the present century.

But the belief in the efficacy of simples has almost entirely disappeared. The last of the old race of herb-doctors is gone. One of the last, Dr. Prior tells us, was living at Market Lavington, in Wiltshire, at the close of the last century. His name was Dr. Batter. He had been brought up very humbly, and 'lived and dressed as a poor man in a cottage by the roadside, where he was born and where his father and grandfather had lived before him, and been famous in their day as bonesetters. There, if the weather permitted, he would bring out his chair and table, and seat his numerous patients on the hedgebank, and prescribe for them out of doors. It is said that, being well acquainted with every part of the county, he would usually add to the names of the plants that he ordered, the localities near the home of his visitor where they would most readily be found.' Still, though the genuine old-fashioned race of herbalists has died out, yet here and there in remote country districts there is a lingering belief in the efficacy of 'harbs.' Richard Jefferies relates that once he met a labourer who was deeply depressed because of the death of a son. The poor fellow had had every attention, but still he regretted one thing. There was a herb, which grew in wet places and was known only to a few, that was a certain cure for the kind of wasting disease which had baffled the skill of the doctor. There was an old man, said the rustic, living somewhere by a river, fifty miles away, who possessed the secret of this herb and by it had accomplished marvellous cures. He had heard of him, but could not by any inquiry find out his exact whereabouts; and so his son died. Everything possible had been done, but still he regretted that the herb had not been applied.

Some years ago there lived in the writer's parish a very old woman who in her younger days had gained a livelihood by selling flowers in a neighbouring town. Sometimes, too, at the right season, she would tramp the country for miles around after watercresses and herbs. With regard to the herbs it was difficult to get much information. The old lady was very reticent on the subject. The names of the herbs she would never mention, but she took them, she said, to a shop at Portsmouth, to a man 'she knowed.' One day, when the old lady was ill, she was in a more communicative mood. A strange thing happened once; she hardly liked to speak of it, but it was true. She had been out all day in Bere Forest after 'harbs'—twenty miles she had been

after 'em—when coming home in the evening, not far from the 'monument,' near the top of the hill, all of a sudden a man she had never seen before stood before her—a sharp-featured man he was, in dark clothes—and he said, 'I'll give you a sovereign for them harbs.' "A sovereign?" says I. "Yes," he says, "a' sovereign," and without another word he puts a piece of money in my hand, takes the harbs, and was gone. I stood there, tremblin' from head to foot, I did, I was that frightened; it were a sovereign right enough—there was no mistake about that—but who the man might be, and where he had got to—that's what frightened me. I kept that sovereign, for years I kept it; *I didn't dare spend it.* 'But, 'Liza,' I ventured to ask, 'did you never see the man again?' 'Ever see 'im again? Yes,' she said, 'I seed 'im once again, years afterwards it was, but I know'd 'im; you couldn't mistake them sharp features, and them clothes. I was comin' along the road, past Wickham Wood, when there, not twenty yards ahead of me, he stood; but almost afore I seed 'im he was gone. No, *I didn't dare spend that sovereign.*'

When 'Liza died more than a hundred gold pieces were found in a leather bag concealed in her mattress. She had done well with her flowers and her 'harbs.' But she was the last of the simple-gatherers of Hampshire. It is seldom now that you meet with a cottager who knows even by sight the plants which once constituted the village remedies. They still grow in their old localities, in the meadows and the hedgerows and the woods—a few even linger in the cottage gardens; but no one comes to gather them. It is not that the labourers have ceased to believe in infallible remedies; but now they send on market days to the chemist's shop in the town for the quack medicines advertised in the local papers, and in which they believe as firmly as their forefathers believed in simples. Times have changed. The hellebore still flourishes on Selborne Hill, but the good women no longer gather it, and do not so much as know of its existence.

Not so very long ago a decoction of the greater celandine, a plant allied to the poppies and having a gamboge-coloured juice, was commonly used in the Isle of Wight as a remedy for infantine jaundice. The plant may still be seen in considerable plenty between Yarmouth and Freshwater, not far from the spot where the wild asparagus grows, but the country folk pass it by. Among the ruins and in the neighbourhood of ancient priories plants may often be found which once flourished in the monastic herb-gardens. The *Aristolochia*, or birthwort, formerly held to

possess great medicinal virtue, may still be seen on the venerable walls of St. Cross at Winchester. In the woods near Quarr Abbey, in the Isle of Wight, the lungwort is abundant every spring; it may also be found in the neighbourhood of Beaulieu Abbey, in the New Forest. Another medicinal plant still to be found among the picturesque ruins of the great Cistercian Abbey is the hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*). This plant is probably the hyssop of Scripture, and was much valued for its healing properties. Gerarde grew it in his garden at Holborn, and Spenser spoke of it as 'Sharp Isope, good for green wounds' remedies.'

The ancient use of hyssop as a simple is indicated by its specific name '*officinalis*.' This term, as used in our British flora, always signifies that the plant so named had a recognised place in the *Materia medica*. From twenty to thirty of our British plants carry this specific title, and in every instance the term recalls to mind their former use. We have already noticed several of these medicinal plants—the lungwort, the gromwell, the Solomon's seal. Among others may be mentioned such well-known herbs as fennel, and borage, and comfrey, and calamint, and barm. The anti-scorbutic properties of watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and scurvy grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) are generally admitted, though since the discovery of lime-juice they are seldom used medicinally. The root of the dandelion still yields a well-known medicine. The use of vervain (*Verbena officinalis*), a plant often found in churchyards and waste places, dates back to very remote times. It was one of the four sacred plants of the Druids, who attributed to it virtues almost divine. It was supposed to 'vanquish fevers and other distempers, to be an antidote to the bite of serpents, and a charm to cultivate friendship.' But of all plants used as simples, none perhaps had a greater repute among our forefathers than *Euphrasia officinalis*, or eyebright. Its praises were sung by Spenser and Milton and Thomson. Its efficacy was such that, according to the old herbalist, 'if the herb were as much used as it is neglected, it would half spoil the spectacle-maker's trade'; and he adds: 'A man would think that reason should teach people to prefer the preservation of their natural sight before artificial spectacles.' The belief in the efficacy of eyebright has hardly died out yet. Anne Pratt tells us that, going into a small shop at Dover, she saw a quantity of the plant suspended from the ceiling, and was informed that it was gathered and dried as being an excellent remedy for bad eyes. Still in rural districts persons

are met with who have 'heard tell' that the plant is good for weak eyes; just as now and then, though very rarely, a cottager may be seen gathering nettles or dandelions for the purpose of making tea. This occasional use of 'harb-tay' seems to be the last vestige of a belief in simples which was universal among our forefathers.

JOHN VAUGHAN.

At the Sign of the Ship.

DESPITE my recent exertions in the doctrine of Evolution as applied to white and other Cats, the Diploma (or whatever it is) of the Royal Society has not yet arrived. Nay, so great an authority as Dr. Andrew Wilson (in that erudite organ the *Illustrated London News*) chides me for calling Evolution 'an easy business.' But I spoke elliptically. I meant not that the process of Becoming—the cosmic process—is easy, but that it is easy to write theories of how it works in each case. Nothing can be more facile. Let me assure the learned Doctor that I do not 'spite' science; I only dislike what the apostle names 'science, falsely so called.' Every now and then the devotees of physical science need to be called back to the severity of literary methods.

* * *

For example, if *we* find an unpublished document or inscription which makes against our theories, we do not burn it or deface it. How unlike the conduct of the geologist in the following anecdote! Two geologists were geologising in some lonely Highland place. One of them, looking about with a field-glass, beheld the other occupied all day in rolling a great rock or boulder to the edge of a hill, whence it rolled down a considerable distance. At dinner he asked his friend what on earth he had been about. The friend declared that he had only been rolling the stone for exercise, but, being cross-examined, at last gave out the truth. 'The confounded thing,' he exclaimed, 'was two hundred feet too high to suit my theory.' I have also heard of a great astronomer who serenely burked all observations which did not tally with his hypothesis. 'For,' he argued, 'my hypothesis is right, therefore these observations, which do not agree with it, are bound to be wrong.' This method, to be sure, is that of the Higher Criticism. 'This or that passage in Homer, or Habakkuk, does not suit my theory; therefore this or that hypothesis

is an interpolation.' A babe can see the faults of the logic, and I am really serving the ends of science when I say so. For somehow the use of the 'arms of precision' of science still leaves savants human beings, greatly under the control of Bacon's Idola, or prejudices of every kind. Then Dr. Wilson has something to say, far beyond me, about photographs done in the dark—skotographs, as one may call them. No doubt these are curious, but one read about them long ago in Mr. Stead's periodical, *Border Land*. I think the author of the article attributed the skotographs to spirits, an opinion which one were loth to adopt. Still, there the things were, and were worth examining, however wildly unscientific the photographer may have been.

* * *

We hear the complaints of Booksellers, and all authors must sympathise. Yet I am apt to think that it is not every bookseller who knows his own business. Thus a lady, a stranger, wrote lately to me from a well-known educational centre. She wanted the translation which I once wrote of a Greek poet. But every bookseller, twiddling a great catalogue, said that he had never heard of it, thought it must be out of print, and generally put the lady off her generous design to buy the book. She therefore appealed to me, and I was able to inform her that the work existed in the Golden Treasury Series of Messrs. Macmillan. Surely that is not a very obscure source! The booksellers of a town which is an educational centre *might* know the Golden Treasury Series. If men who deal in books decline to take the trouble, or lack the brains necessary, to procure their own wares, what can be done for them? Messrs. Seignobos and Langlois, in their book on the art or science of writing history, devote a chapter to what they call *Heuristik*—that is, the process of finding out documents about any given person or period. These documents may be in the Bodleian, the Bibliothèque Nationale, or the Charter Chest of the Mulligan, or the Vatican, or the archives of Kelso town: they are often hard to find. But modern books in their fourth or fifth edition are not so obscurely located. Young, ardent booksellers ought to be educated in *Heuristik*, the art of finding a modern work which is not Mr. Dooly—if that is how the name is spelled. Otherwise publishers and authors alike must suffer, while one does not see how the bookseller can prosper if he does not know where to get his own wares. A Chair of *Heuristik* ought to be founded, say in the University of London.

Perhaps the celebrated Miss Millard would deliver a course of lectures.

* *

An eminent mathematician urges against my suggestion that, as bookselling is a bad business, the more a bookseller does not sell books, the better. For this reason: in such cases as that quoted he feigns, or assiduously cultivates, ignorance. In the same way circulating libraries stave off the public demand, by saying that a book is 'out.' In a month or so the demand expires, a new book excites curiosity, and that curiosity is damped down in the same way. Clearly the public has no right to want a book which is not a popular novel. Unwilling to buy (even if that were permitted), and staved off by the circulating library, the public is compelled to be content to read just what everybody is reading.

* *

My friend also urges that Monte Carlo, with its tables, is a great preservative against suicide. True, people do kill themselves at Monte Carlo more than in most towns of the same population. But, he says, they are men at the end of their resources, who go to Monte Carlo with their last thousand-franc note. If they win, we hear no more of them; whereas if they had stayed at home they would have slain themselves there. If they lose, then they destroy themselves at Monte Carlo, and so give the place an ill name, which would otherwise have been distributed all over their various Continental domiciles. Such is his argument, which I leave to statisticians.

* *

Mr. Stephen Gwynn, in an article on 'The Sensibility of Critics,' replies very good-humouredly to some newspaper ferocities of Mr. Walkley and myself. We were not in collusion, nor have I even seen Mr. Walkley's article, though charmed to have him of my party. Mr. Gwynn himself began it, trailing his coat in the most provoking way, and asserting that Miss Austen and her heroines were not lovable. *Non omnia possumus omnes*. I am not such a Turk as to be in love with *all* Miss Austen's heroines. Did I keep a seraglio, as Dr. Johnson contemplated doing (a seraglio of the fancy), it would contain

Elizabeth Bennet,
Marianne Dashwood,
Anne Elliot,

out of Miss Austen's lot.

From Scott's lot,

Rose Bradwardine,
Diana Vernon,
Catherine Seton.

I do not want any of Dickens's young women ; but of course Beatrix Esmond is always the queen of these gatherings, with Becky Sharp, Theo Lambert, and Betsinda. Miss Barbara Grant in *Catrina* and Miss Rose Joscelyn in *Evan Harrington* represent Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Meredith, and Mademoiselle de Montalais stands for Dumas. These, then, represent the existing state of my affections, and if Mr. Gwynn has other charmers I do not quarrel with his taste. But when he dislikes Miss Austen, personally, I again ask him how he can resist her as we see the smiling, mischievous lady in her miniature? Has he looked at the photograph of the miniature, and is he still obdurate?

* *

I never, never said that if Mr. Gwynn fell on a stone pavement, off the Cobb, and 'split his skull,' it 'might perhaps let some sense into his brains.' I merely fancied that a slight cerebral readjustment, such as occurred to the dull priest who became very clever, and a Pope, after a fall on his head, might be serviceable. For Louisa was not 'a fluttering, ineffectual young woman, standing on the top of a stone, and diving off it on the chance that a man might be there to catch her—otherwise, without male interposition, certain of destruction.' Captain Wentworth was 'jumping Louisa off the Cobb,' and poor Louisa 'missed her tip,' and took a header on to the stones. Anybody might do it. I have seen the thing occur at Lord's, where a lady, jumping off a drag, caught her skirt, missed the hands of an unhappy man who was helping her, and fell flat on her face on the ground. Luckily it was a bowler's wicket that day, and the lady (far from 'ineffectual') was only hurt as to her nose, not stunned. Louisa's accident was of the same kind ; I have visited the Cobb, at Lyme Regis, that sacred spot, and quite understand the circumstances. Mr. Gwynn seems to think them improbable in themselves, and proof of the feeble nature of Louisa. He has helped ladies over stiles, and *they* did not tumble on their heads. Nor did Louisa as a rule ; she had been 'jumped' several times, but that one time she 'missed her tip.' Moreover, the Cobb is not a stile ; and as to 'jumping off it unaided,' *ne faict ce tour qui veult*. I doubt if Mr. Gwynn has visited the Cobb—with a lady prepared to make the experiment.

* *

I chose a list of Miss Austen's admirers out of persons of very various tastes—Macaulay, George IV., Scott, Whately, Mr. W. D. Howells. I might add Mrs. Richmond Ritchie and Mr. Saintsbury, for variety's sake. Against these Mr. Gwynn arrays Miss Charlotte Brontë and Dickens. Miss Brontë did not care for Miss Austen, any more than I agree with Lockhart in placing Miss Brontë high above Dickens. Miss Brontë had neither wit nor humour. Passions in tatters, parts to tear a cat in, were in her line. Well, I prefer Mrs. Radcliffe, as reflected in the terrors of Catherine Morland, to the Radcliffian horrors of the house of Mr. Rochester. Indeed, long ago I described Miss Morland's experiences in Mr. Rochester's house, and her puzzlement over Miss Eyre, the governess in that heroic establishment, with its vases of Derby spar, Tyrian curtains, and ladies who appear at luncheon in blue satin (I think) and diamonds. Miss Austen knew what she was writing about; Miss Brontë, when she strayed beyond her very limited experience, did not. If I had the courage to say what I think about Miss Brontë, Mr. Gwynn's sufferings from critics would be nothing to mine. I am not anxious to meet Miss Brontë in the Paradise of Authors. Even in Kensington Mr. Thackeray slunk away from her and took sanctuary in his club. It is not that I deny her genius, but I do not think her amiable; just as Mr. Gwynn thinks Miss Austen unamiable, and has the courage to say as much. He thinks she stands to Miss Brontë as Watteau to Turner. As Dioscorides to Fuseli would rather be my comparison. It would surprise me if Dickens had admired Miss Austen: I daresay he preferred Wilkie Collins. But if I mention Dickens I shall upset a hornet's nest; Burns and Dickens are dangerous themes. Scott is thus dismissed by Mr. Gwynn: 'he systematically underrated his own work, and habitually praised that of his contemporaries in such terms as Mr. Lang usually reserves for Mr. Rider Haggard.' Can Mr. Gwynn quote these 'terms'? Did I ever say, as Macaulay said of Miss Austen, that Mr. Rider Haggard 'comes next to Shakespeare in the art of delineating human nature'? No, I merely said of *King Solomon's Mines* that I preferred it to an average year's 'output' of novels. So I do, very much so; for, Oh, the average year's out-put is a weary thing, whereas for a really good yarn the record of Mr. Quatermain's voyage and adventure holds a high place. A catholic taste, of course, is needed before one can admire both Mr. Quatermain and *Persuasion*. Our tastes ought to be catholic; at least, we get more entertainment in that way.

Miss Austen I do not rank with 'Fielding, Scott, or Thackeray.' She was a miniaturist (as she said of herself) or a gem-engraver; she may be compared with Ozias Humphreys or Dioscorides, not with Reynolds or Gainsborough. But all such comparisons are misleading. Miss Austen, like Sappho, was perfection itself—within her own field. Her excellence was classical; she had not the blemishes and excesses of other women of genius, Mrs. Browning or Miss Brontë. They, at their best, might sing, or speak, 'more wildly well,' but the mass of their performance is less admirable than that of Miss Austen. The essence of her wrong-doing is that she 'tolerated young ladies who felt and displayed a great deal of emotion under circumstances when we should think it silly or misplaced.' *Tout sied aux belles*, as Molière says; and I can 'tolerate' the effusions of the younger Miss Dashwood, aged sixteen, if Mr. Gwynn cannot. But, while he thinks that 'caricature is not Miss Austen's method,' has he forgotten Mr. Collins? He is immortal; but Mr. Pecksniff, equally deathless, is not much more of a caricature—I hope.

* * *

Mr. Bayford Harrison, also in *The Cornhill*, has found a curious treasure of old Scottish anecdotes. Thus he has a Scottish Vicar of Bray: Mr. Young, of Ruthwell, who began as a Presbyterian, was next an Episcopalian (in 1617), and held to his cure through the Covenant and into the prelatism of the Restoration. This was probably not unusual. But a better case is Winram, of St. Andrews, who, I learn, sat on Borthwick's trial for heresy (about 1540, I think), and also sat on Borthwick's process of rehabilitation (in 1561). That did show unexampled tenacity. Winram sleeps in the roofless chapel of St. Leonard's, in St. Andrews, having been a leading potentate, both Presbyterian and Catholic, and under either dispensation a professional judge of orthodoxy. Worthy Mr. Young merely 'sat tight'; took the Covenant, took the Oaths, each in their season. A man of this temper would be the last to destroy the famous 'Cross of Ruthwell,' with its sculptures and English sacred poem in Runic characters. That 'idol' lasted through the iconoclastic fury of the Reformation—thanks, perhaps, to Mr. Young. The Covenanters ordered its destruction; it again escaped. Now this precious relic of dim ages stands erect within the kirk of Ruthwell, where I saw it last year. Yet, in fact, there is nothing 'idoltrous' in minister or people at Ruthwell.

* * *

That Forbes of Culloden, just after Prestonpans, prophesied the battle of Culloden, almost under his own windows, I never heard before. Pennant, writing a generation later, seems to be the authority. The good, golfing, hard-drinking, honest and honourable Culloden is a very unlikely subject of second-sight.



Mr. Bayford Harrison alludes to the Black Captain, whose legend I heard from a boatman on Loch Awe, and published. Scott also published it, and got into trouble with the daughter of the gallant officer who was bodily carried away by his friend the Deil early in this century. I thought I had found the Black Officer again, in Gaelic and English, in Mr. John Whyte's *How to Learn Gaelic*.¹ But the Black one was really 'The Black Tailor of the Battle Axe.' He was Lochiel's man, and 'made catskins cheap' in a battle with the Mackintoshes (Clan Chattan). As an example of diction this is curious: 'the winged denizens of the moor were fondly and warmly resting under shelter of the bank.' I like this, because many years ago an acquaintance of mine had to write an article on The Twelfth of August for *The Daily* —. His editor rebuked him: 'You have used the word "grouse" a dozen times.' 'What am I to call them?' asked the journalist. 'Oh, winged denizens of the moor,' said the editor. He was no Celt, but he seems by native genius to have hit on a Gaelic periphrasis. However, I am in a Gaelic-speaking country, and can consult the learned. Verily, after the tropical heat of London nights, it is pleasant to be surrounded by the cones and masses of the hills, while the tide runs like a river below the window, with a perpetual plashing sound. Fortunately, there is absolutely no fishing to beguile and disappoint, but a lady of twelve, having selected three walking-sticks to serve as stumps, is bowling left hand, with a remarkable break-back, to a batsman of ten summers. If he cuts to cover-point, he cuts into the salt sea; and if he hits to leg, he lands the ball in the coppice Lettermore, where somebody shot the Red Fox near a hundred and fifty years ago. It may not be County cricket, but it is pleasant to behold.



A curious legend, which I have never seen in print, is told about the Bloody Loch at the very head of Glencoe. At an un-

¹ *Northern Chronicle* Office, Inverness, 1897.

certain date the Macdonalds of Glencoe, allied with the Mamore men (Camerons), went up the glen and raided the country of the Campbells. They rested at the Bloody Loch on their return, and divided the spoil. The Mamore men were about to cross the hills for home, when horse-play began over half a cheese which nobody wanted. The raiders threw it at each other till a Mamore man hit a Macdonald in the eye with the despised dainty. The Macdonald dirked him; the fray, of course, became general, and—only one man of the two parties was left alive. Hence ‘The Bloody Loch.’

* * *

The antiquity of the popular expletive ‘bloody’ is matter of dispute. I find it in an ecclesiastical record of the early Reformation. A woman publicly apologises for having called a married lady ‘a bluidy common ——.’ This is early evidence for the word as an ornamental epithet.

* * *

To return to Booksellers, an acquaintance informs me that he asked one of the trade for Schlegel’s *Lectures on Shakespeare*. ‘No such work exists,’ replied the Bibliopole. My friend wrote the title down and handed it to the tradesman. ‘Oh, *Sledgell!*’ said the man; he knew Sledgell, not Schlegel. My friend, lately, read a favourable review of a new novel. It was of the historical, military, kail-yard school, and a rather favourable example of the *genre*. Starting from Leadenhall Street, my friend entered every bookseller’s shop till he reached Oxford Street. Nobody had a copy of this new novel by a well-known author (*not* Mr. Crockett). At last my friend saw the volume in the window of a shop. He entered and asked for the object of his pilgrimage. ‘I have not got it,’ said the dealer. ‘Excuse me, I can show you it in your window,’ said my friend. ‘Then I don’t know how it came there,’ replied the bookseller. Now this was (for I have read it) an exemplary narrative, and it had been favourably received, though without a chorus of vehement applause, by the critics. Who, on these terms, would be a novelist?

* * *

A friend who is a master of magic and spells explains the story (in the last *Ship*) of Lord Lytton’s ring and the Indian conjurer. The wizard gave another ring, not Lord Lytton’s, to

the aide-de-camp who threw it into the well. Then, when Lord Lytton opened his despatch-box, the magician popped the ring into it, unobserved. Good business ; but in the case of the second experiment the conjurer did not use this method, for the lady's ring was after long labour dredged out of the well into which the officer threw it. So I doubt the explanation ; but, of course, no report of a conjurer's trick can be accepted as evidence.

ANDREW LANG.

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